

PREPARATION OF A "HANDBOOK OF AFRICAN SEABIRDS"

I am compiling a Handbook of African Seabirds which is due for completion in 1982. The handbook will cover the Afrotropical region and adjacent areas south to Antarctica (Fig. 1). Some 130 species of seabirds either breed within or visit this area. Each will receive a review which will be pitched at a level intermediate between that of Serventy, Serventy and Warham's "Handbook of Australian Seabirds" and "The Birds of the Western Palearctic" by Cramp and Simmons.

Each species account will cover : taxonomy, plumage description, field identification, measurements and weight, nonbreeding distribution, and diet and feeding habits. In addition for species breeding within the handbook area the accounts will cover : breeding distribution and population, breeding and moult seasons, behaviour and voice, breeding habitat and breeding biology.

The species accounts will be preceded by a series of chapters outlining seabird biology with particular emphasis on the area and species covered in this handbook. These chapters will cover : the marine environment, the evolution of sea and land areas concerned, seabird feeding ecology, seabird breeding habitat, breeding biology, physiology, migrations and movements, zoogeography, relations between man and birds, conservation, and the history of the study of seabirds in the area.

The designated area has been without adequate seabird coverage and is complementary to handbooks covering seabirds of adjacent areas. The area involves some 50 nations with a diverse and widespread literature in at least six major languages. The handbook will be of particular importance in synthesising this literature and presenting it in a single volume with local information placed in a regional context. In addition it will be a major source for scientific reference and a sourcebook for conservationists.

Information on seabirds within the handbook area is very far from complete. Readers of the *Cormorant* will greatly help the standard of information in the handbook if they forward papers which they have in press. The type of papers that have appeared in the *Cormorant* reviewing the distribution of a single species or the seabirds of a specific region are of great value to the compilation of the handbook. I encourage readers to undertake such species or regional reviews.

Any information will, of course, be fully acknowledged in the handbook.

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The region covered by the proposed Handbook of African Seabirds

