

# To Catch a Meercat



J.O.P.

Contrary to reports that stokstert meercats or suricates are easily caught by running them down, flooding their burrows or trapping them, these insectivores are extremely wary and difficult to capture. During the past months the Museum's mammalogist Callie Lynch, his technician Johan Eksteen and their helpers found that digging up the colonies is the only really successful method by which a non selective sample can be procured on which research regarding population, size, sex and age ratios, and reproductive analysis can be undertaken.

Manually digging up the colonies is however far too laborious and time-consuming a task to be practically feasible. This problem was overcome by making use of a 4,5 h.p. mechanical trench digger. Hessian sacking 1 m high is erected around a meercat colony. Trenching commences on the side of the colony where the burrows show the least activity and parallel trenches 1 m to 1,5 m deep and 50 cm wide are dug. When approximately three quarters of the area has been excavated the meercats emerge from their burrows and in their attempts to flee rush into the hessian sacking where they are then caught by hand.

At the Museum the suricates are dissected and studied. The information thus obtained on the feeding habits, size and structure of the colonies, breeding season, age of puberty, litter size, internal and external parasites harboured by these animals etc. not only contributes to the knowledge about these denizens of the veld, but also towards the establishment of sound conservation measures to insure their existence as a species.



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## Borduurwerk

### BIRD WATCHERS CLUB



A.v.E.

A Bird Watchers Club was recently founded under the auspices of the Free State Branch of the Wildlife Society of Southern Africa.

The Wildlife Society is one of eighteen clubs and associations which make use of the Auditorium of the National Museum as a venue for regular meetings of its members. Four staff members of the Museum serve on the Committee of the Society and our ornithologist Dr. Tibor Farkas acts as technical adviser for the Bird Watchers. Apart from partaking in regular outings club members are also engaged in the compilation of a check-list of the birds of Bloemfontein and the Bird Sanctuary which is now being developed in Deale Road, next to Greenhill Convent.

If you are interested in bird watching, the Bird Sanctuary or nature conservation as such, contact can be made with this Society through the Museum.

'n Groot versameling borduurwerk van wyle mev Aletta Wessels is deur haar man, mnr. Tewie Wessels van Goedgenoeg, Sannaspos aan die Museum geskenk.

Die uitstalling van tafeldoeke, lopers, stoelkussings, teemussies, muurbehangsels en tafellappies is tans in die Museum te sien

Mev Wessels het 'n groot belangstelling en hefde vir naald- en borduurwerk gehad. Sy was vir 22 jaar 'n knap leerling van mev Heisie van Wyk onder wie se leiding die meeste van die borduurwerk in die uitstalling gedoen is. Die artikels verteenwoordig 'n groot verskeidenheid borduursoorte soos kruissteek, swartwerk, reticella, gobelin, rafelwerk, hedebo, sorbello, bardanger, saamtrekwerk, assistie en Hongaarse borduurwerk.

Mnr. Wessels het ook aan die Museum 'n aandrok van suiver wolstof geskenk wat deur haar gedra is, tydens haar kroning as wolkoningin vir Wepener in 1940



Volksblad

### IN MEMORIAM



J.O.P.

Mnr. W. J. Pretorius, Voorradebeamp- te van die Nasionale Museum sedert 1 Julie 1976 is ons op 22 September 1977 deur die dood ontnem. In hierdie kort periode het hy puik diens gelewer. Langs hierdie weg betuig die Raad en personeel hul diepste meegevoel aan die eggenote, familie en vriende van Oom Pikkie.