

Table talk

By Annalize Mouton



Demanding kids. The breeding season for the hundreds of feathery creatures in our garden has been fruitful, producing little robins, sunbirds and flycatchers that we know of. About a dozen breeding Red Bishops have delighted us by frequenting the feeders and hanging around on the reeds at the bottom end of the garden. Then one day we saw a father accompanied by two little ones, clearly on their first excursion to a restaurant. Although the seed was lying in the abalone shell feeder, the chicks still demanded to be fed. This photograph (one of a sequence of about eighty) was shot on the second day out, in late afternoon. Initially the chicks put up a really animated display to demand food, but they gradually learned to help themselves. They now compete with the Common Waxbills, Laughing Doves, Pintailed Widgeon, Masked Weavers, Cape Canaries, Bully Canaries and others for food at the table.

Experienced birders to whom we spoke did not know that the male Red Bishop handled the feeding duties, so this photograph may be the first record of this particular type of behaviour.