

# *Afring News*

(previously Safring News)

## The Journal of the South African Bird Ringing Unit (SAFRING)

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**Vignettes:** Submission of line drawings and vignettes would be welcomed.

**Previous issues:** For back numbers, please contact SAFRING.

**Reviews:** The Editor will consider any item relevant to bird ringing or migration studies.

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# Editorial

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## Ring wear

This is a great *Afring News* issue for me as it has several articles on weavers! Sociable Weavers live in a tough environment. The Osbornes' study shows that Sociable Weavers will fly a few kilometres to find water. Rick Nuttall shows that aluminium rings are definitely not suitable for these weavers and this raises the issue of ring wear. I did a quick query on SAFRING's database with the following criteria: I searched for all retraps and recoveries of weaverbirds (Ploceidae) with BC (stainless steel) and BD (aluminium alloy) rings, and an elapsed time of more than 5.5 years. There were 190 records for BC rings and 34 for BD rings. Of course, most of the 100 000 BC rings have been used and have been in circulation longer than BD rings. The 'oldest' weaver BC ring is of Masked Weaver BC13187 that was found dead 11.5 years after ringing. The 'oldest' weaver BD ring is not far behind, belonging to Red Bishop BD16398 that was retrapped 8 years after ringing. Thus it seems that BD rings can survive for many years, but ringers will need to assess if they are suitable for specific species and in specific areas. I still prefer to use stainless steel rings on weavers.

## Moult

It is great to see articles on primary moult in birds, as this is one area where every ringer can contribute. It is not easy to study moult in the Scalyfeathered Finch since there are many irregularities, as Stephanie Tyler's paper shows. It is still important, however, to know this and understand how moult fits into the annual cycle of birds living in arid regions. Mark Brown and colleagues indicate that moult in Thickbilled Weavers is synchronous in a local area. Now we need more data from other areas to compare the timing and duration of primary moult in different regions. I have extracted the electronic data from SAFRING's database to start such an analysis.

## Export material

Ringers are often requested to send samples of ringed birds (feathers, blood) to researchers. This is a great way in which ringers can contribute to science. We need to be aware, however, of the legal export requirements. Mark Anderson and his colleague have provided the legal background and requirements for exporting material from the Northern Cape. Similar regulations may be expected in the other provinces. Ringers need to ensure that the researcher requesting material is aware of these requirements and allow sufficient time to obtain these before starting the collecting. If you have any reservations about the research project, please make contact with SAFRING.

## Other news

It is pleasing to have an article by Malcolm Wilson on the large numbers of migrants and residents he has ringed in Uganda. He visits South Africa frequently and has started ringing locally as well. In future issues of *Afring News* there will be ringing reports from Tanzania, Zambia and other African countries.

Vincent Ward wrote an article on ageing and sexing Cape Siskins. What about all the other ringers, wondering what to do with their data? Please look at ways of ageing and sexing the birds you catch most often, and write it up!

During 2002 there will be two national ringing courses in addition to local courses and ringing weekends. In October there will be a course in Lamberts Bay, and in December the annual Wakkerstroom course. Details will be made available on our web page, BirdLife South Africa's newsletter and other media.

A final request to all ringers – *please send ringing schedules in regularly*. Timeous submission enables us to respond promptly to members of the public soon after their reports of a ringed bird are received by SAFRING, and also facilitates ringing reporting.

*Dieter Oschadleus*

## Sociable Weavers drink water

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### Introduction

Ringling can contribute to the biological knowledge of southern African birds through accidental observations. This happened to me in 1998 when I began ringling at Sonderwater Farm, Outjo District in Namibia. I set up a mistnet near the homestead stock dam at 19°15.394'S, 15°13.432'E to catch birds coming in to drink water. At first I caught a host of the usual Red-eyed Bulbuls *Pycnonotus nigricans*, sparrows and weavers. I used to ring birds in Zambia back in the 1970s but living in Alaska for the past 20 years caused a bit of rust to settle in on all the fine details of identification: i.e. plumage, age and sexual difference. As I caught each bird I would consult my bible, *Roberts' birds of southern Africa* (Maclean 1993), to see how to tell the sexes apart.

When I came to the Sociable Weavers *Philetarius socius* no sexual difference was noted but the phrase under the food section, 'seldom drinks water', caught my eye. I was netting at a waterhole and hundreds of Sociable Weavers were coming in to drink. I was intrigued by their behaviour and their obvious need for water and I wondered how far the birds were flying to the waterhole to drink. After catching 206 weavers at the dam I then set up nets at all the accessible Sociable Weaver nests on the farmlands surrounding the waterhole. The farm habitat is mainly Mopane *Colophospermum mopani* woodland with Black thorn *Acacia mellifera*, Purple pod Terminalia *Terminalia prunioides* in the rockier areas and some open plains.

We set up 9 m mistnets at each nest colony in the late evening and early morning to catch

a sample size of 50 birds and to uniquely colour ring the birds at each nest. We counted all the individual nest entrance holes to determine if the nesting colony had at least 50 birds present. If there were fewer than 50 nest holes, we only ringed for one day. The farm had other boreholes and stock tanks, so any nesting colonies close to those water points were not sampled. We worked our way outwards from the homestead stock dam until the number of recaptured birds we found dropped off to zero. We assumed that birds at those nests were finding water at other sources. We slowly worked around the cardinal compass points until all nests had been sampled. There was one nest 600 m north of the homestead but it was on a neighbouring game farm within a lion proof game fence and the presence of lions precluded us climbing over the fence to net at dusk and dawn.

### Results

Between 30 March and 2 December 1998 we mistnetted and ringed 206 Sociable Weavers at the homestead stock dam. We surveyed the farm and found most of the weaver colonies were located to the west of the homestead. There were no colonies in an area from the southeast to southwest as the bush was too thick, mainly composed of Acacia and Terminalia. The nearest water point was 3.9 km southeast and the nearest weaver colony was 5 km south. We netted at 13 colonies on the following dates: 30 January; 4, 5, 14, 15 April; and 9 May 1999. The weavers nested in Mopane trees (n = 10), *Acacia tortilis* (n = 2) and *Boscia albitrunca* (n = 1). The number of previously ringed weavers varied from 0–12 birds (Table 1). The closer the nests were to the

**Table 1.** Distance Sociable Weavers in Namibia will fly to drink water.

Colony (no./name)	Distance (km)	Direction (degrees)	Number of nests	Number caught	Number ringed	Percentage ringed
67	2.24	278	5	0	0	0
68	3.19	286	15	30	0	0
69	3.68	271	27	32	0	0
Pink	3.45	265	81	36	11	30
71	3.31	267	15	19	0	0
72	3.62	308	4	0	0	0
Blue	1.22	72	25	30	8	27
Yellow	1.65	98	62	33	0	–
Purple	1.87	292	23	15	2	13
Red	2.23	288	71	61	11	18
Green	0.96	304	48	34	7	20
White	1.38	292	36	35	5	14
Orange	1.09	293	35	37	12	32

homestead the more ringed birds were found. The one nest to the north that was not netted probably had the highest percentage of ringed birds as it was only 600 m away. There was a windmill with a stock tank located 2.25 km at 145° from house. The Yellow colony was 1.53 km from that windmill and 1.65 km from the homestead. We found no ringed birds there which indicates that the weavers fly to the nearest water. The colonies no. 68 and 72 were 1.88 and 2.3 km respectively from a windmill on the next farm to the west.

After colour ringing the birds at the individual colonies we planned to net intensively at the homestead and use binoculars to look for colour rings. We wanted to see if some of the colonies that had no previously ringed birds were also watering at the homestead. However, the opportunity to purchase a farm

20 km to the east arose and we left Sonderwater. After building a house on the new farm, Windpoort (19°21.48'S, 15°29.02'E), we immediately set up a mistnet near a bird bath and proceeded to catch Sociable Weavers. The nearest colony was located 2.8 km away.

The farmer who owns Sonderwater told us that when he started his pumps at dry water points, the weavers would fly to the site upon hearing the pump engine run.

In conclusion we find that where water is available, Sociable Weavers will drink and will fly up to 3.5 km to find water to drink.

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# Moult in Scalyfeathered Finches *Sporopipes squamifrons* in southeast Botswana

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## Methods and results

Between July 1996 and November 2000 I mistnetted and ringed birds in *Acacia* bush at Ruretse some 20 km NE of Gaborone. Various seed-eaters including Scalyfeathered Finches *Sporopipes squamifrons* were attracted by millet or sorghum seed provided in a tray and by pools of water where they drank regularly. The wing length of most birds was measured to the nearest 0.5 mm, using the flattened maximum chord method, and most birds were weighed to the nearest 0.5 g, using a 50 g Pesola balance, and they were examined for moult. Primary moult was scored in the standard way (Ginn & Melville 1983).

In the study period 283 Scalyfeathered Finches were ringed and biometrics were recorded for most of these. Catches were higher in the dry late winter months. Fewer birds were caught in April and May (Table 1), partly because of much reduced ringing effort in these months (and in December) but also because there was much seed and water available elsewhere in the latter part of the wet

season and early in the dry season.

The mean wing length of Scalyfeathered Finches ( $n = 266$ ) was 56.9 mm ( $\pm 1.61$ ) with a range of 51–60 mm. Mean weight ( $n = 224$ ) was 11.5 g ( $\pm 0.89$ , range 8.5–14.9 g).

Most Scalyfeathered Finches were unfortunately aged only as full grown so timing of adult and post-juvenile moult cannot be adequately assessed. Moult of the primary feathers was recorded in every month except March and April (and May when no birds were caught). Strangely, few were caught in the last stages of primary moult. Data from 25 retrapped birds suggested that moult in Scalyfeathered Finches is rather slow. It took four to seven days for the moult score to increase by one, giving duration of primary moult as *c.* 200–350 days, assuming that moult progresses in a linear fashion. In some birds, primary feathers were a mix of completely new feathers and old unmoulted feathers, typical of suspended or interrupted moult. Suspended moult might explain the incidences where moult was extremely slow. For example, in one bird the moult score only

**Table 1.** Numbers of Scalyfeathered Finches ringed in each month with numbers and percentages in moult and categories of moult scores.

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
<b>No. ringed</b>	24	15	16	3	0	33	43	38	45	26	29	11
<b>In moult:</b>												
<b>no.</b>	11	12	2	0		19	21	30	19	16	21	10
<b>%</b>	46%	80%	12.5%	0%		58%	49%	79%	42%	61.5%	72%	91%
<b>Moult score:</b>												
<b>1–10</b>	4	5	1			2	5	4	7	1	3	3
<b>11–20</b>	3	4	1			7	7	9	3	7	10	3
<b>21–30</b>	2	3				4	5	9	5	3	2	3
<b>31–40</b>	2	0				2	1	5	3	5	4	1
<b>41–49</b>	0	0					3	3	1	0	2	0

increased by four over 45 days.

Whilst moult usually proceeded in the normal way, starting from the innermost primary and continuing outward in sequence (sequential moult), a proportion of birds showed irregular or eccentric moult (Table 2; see Jeni & Winkler 1994). Of 111 birds caught up to April 1999 some 21.6% showed irregular moult. In typical irregular moult, feathers were dropped in two places on the wing. Others were more irregular, perhaps even 'chaotic' (Herremans 2001), with old feathers occurring in three places on the wing. Irregular moult occurred in birds caught between June and February. Although few birds with such moult were accurately aged,

the bird with ring AF53050 caught on 8 February 2000 was known to be at least eight months old as it had been first ringed on 18 June 1999.

In those few birds where moult of the secondary flight feathers was noted, it proceeded either in the normal sequence (the outermost feather being dropped first and moult continuing inwards towards the tertial feathers) or in an irregular way. At least eight birds (of 10) moulted their secondary flight feathers in this atypical fashion.

Other seed-eaters mostly showed sequential moult but five adult Greenwinged Pytilias *Pytilia melba* caught in the summer of 1996/97 and seven caught in April 1998 showed

**Table 2.** Scalyfeathered Finches showing irregular moult or interrupted moult.

Ring	Date	Secondaries						Primaries									
		6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Black/Yellow, R	18/7/1996							0	0	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Purple L	18/7/1996							5	5	0	0	5	5	0	0	0	0
Black/green, L	27/6/1996							1	0	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Light blue, L	5/8/1996	5	5	0	0	0	5	5	4	1	5	5	5	4	0	0	0
Light blue, R	29/1/1997							5	5	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0
W19248	29/1/1997	0	5	5	0	0	4	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AE44104	3/2/1997	0	5	5	5	0	0	5	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AE44111	3/2/1997	5	5	0	5	0	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dark blue, L & R	3/2/1997	5	5	5	3	5	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0
AE44120	3/2/1997	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	4	0	0	0	0	0
AE44121	3/2/1997							0	2	5	0	1	0	5	0	0	0
AE44125	3/2/1997							5	0	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
AE44983	2/11/1997	0	0	0	5	1	1	5	5	5	5	5	5	1	0	0	3
Red R	12/1/1998							3	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	0	0
Black/yellow, L	12/1/1998							0	0	0	0	1	5	5	0	0	0
AE81618	03/9/1998							0	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AE81963	28/10/1998							4	0	0	5	5	0	0	0	0	0
AE81964	28/10/1998							5	0	0	5	5	2	0	0	0	0
Pink L	1/11/1998							5	5	3	0	5	3	0	0	0	0
Pink R	1/11/1998							5	5	0	2	5	5	5	5	5	5
Pink, L & R	1/11/1998							0	0	0	5	5	5	0	0	0	0
Yellow/dark blue, R	22/11/1998	5	5	5	5	5	5	0	5	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0
AF34259	22/11/1998							0	5	0	5	5	0	0	5	0	0
AE34277	10/2/1999	5	5	0	5	5	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AF34018	21/2/1999	5	0	3	0	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
AF53050	8/2/2000							5	0	0	5	0	0	0	2	0	0
AF63235	19/1/2000							5	5	5	3	5	0	0	0	0	0

L = left, R = right wings

irregular moult (Table 3) and some showed suspended moult. Two caught subsequently also showed irregular moult. Irregular moult was recorded occasionally in Blackthroated Canaries *Serinus atrogularis* caught in February and March.

## Discussion

The exact duration of moult in Scalyfeathered Finches was uncertain, but was apparently at least 200 days or more, much longer than in most passerines. It is the rate that feathers are shed rather than the growth rate of individual feathers that influences the duration of moult (Newton 1967). Ideally for all birds caught, details should have been taken of whether each bird had old feathers, new feathers or was in active moult. Underhill & Zucchini (1998) provided a model of avian moult but this depends on the moult score in each bird increasing linearly with time. Not all passerines undergo a linear moult. For example, Rothery *et al.* (2001) found that in the European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*, moult score showed a non-linear increase, with a lower rate of increase in the later stages of moult. It is not known whether this is the case for Scalyfeathered Finches. The lack of a defined moulting season in the Scalyfeathered Finch

may indicate year round breeding.

Suspended moult was frequent in Scalyfeathered Finches and Herremans (1995) also found such moult to be frequent in Green-winged Pytilias in the dry season in SE Botswana. Suspended moult was also noted in Lark-like Buntings *Emberiza impetuani* in August and September (late dry season) and in a few Blackcheeked and Violeteared Waxbill *Uraeginthus granatinus* in April and May (this study). Reasons for such a moult pattern are varied. Some migrants may show arrested moult, beginning to moult in breeding quarters and continuing when they arrive in their non-breeding quarters, e.g. Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris* (*A. novaeseelandiae* in Craig 1983). Other birds may show arrested moult if food resources are scarce. Apparent suspended or interrupted moult could conceivably be mistaken for a slow rate of shedding feathers. In some species feathers are shed rapidly, with two or more growing at the same time. In others feathers are shed more slowly and only one primary feather may be growing at any one time.

Eccentric moult (Jeni & Winkler 1994) appears to be rare in passerines but Herremans (1994, 1995) found such moult in some juvenile Blackcheeked Waxbills *Estrilda*

**Table 3.** Irregular and suspended moult in Green-winged Pytilia (Melba Finch) *Pytilia melba*.

Ring number of <i>Pytilia</i>		Date	Primary flight feathers									
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
AE44182	Adult female	24/01/1997	5	5	5	0	5	4	1	0	0	0
W18201	Adult male	24/01/1997	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0
AE44191	Adult female	24/01/1997	0	0	0	5	5	5	5	0	0	0
AE44016	Adult female	03/02/1997	4	0	0	0	5	5	5	4	0	0
AE44024	Adult male	03/02/1997	5	0	4	0	0	5	0	0	0	0
AF17056	Adult male, right	13/04/1998	5	5	5	5	5	0	0	0	5	0
AF17056	Adult male, left	13/04/1998	5	5	5	5	5	0	0	0	0	5
AE44415	Adult male	13/04/1998	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
AF17055	Adult male	13/04/1998	0	5	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
AE81391	Imm. female	18/04/1998	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
AF17094	Adult female	18/04/1998	0	0	0	5	5	5	0	0	0	0
AF17092	Adult male	18/04/1998	5	5	5	5	4	0	5	0	0	0
AF71368	Adult female	01/03/1999	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	0	0	0
AE44576	Adult female	09/01/1999	5	5	5	5	2	5	2	0	0	0

*erythronotos* in southeast Botswana. In such eccentric moult the longest primary feathers were replaced in descendant sequence but the innermost two to four feathers were retained. Waxbills (Estrildae) undergo a complete moult in the dry season in southern Africa (Craig 1983). Herremans (1995) noted that adult waxbills underwent a relatively fast complete moult in the usual sequence in the first part of the dry season whereas juveniles underwent a partial post-juvenile moult early or late in the dry season.

Eccentric moult in Blackcheeked Waxbills was not noted at Ruretse, but was common in Scalyfeathered Finches. These birds live in very dry habitats where rain and food resources are unpredictable and patchy and young birds also undergo a complete moult. It is of interest that Doublebarred Finches *Taeniopygia bichenovii* in arid areas of northern Australia similarly show eccentric moult which can occur at any time of the year (Pete Collins per. comm.). Not all Scalyfeathered Finches at Ruretse were aged but many of the birds showing eccentric or more irregular moult were immature birds. From Herremans' work (1994, 1995) it seems likely that those Scalyfeathered Finches showing irregular moult and apparently moulting through much of the year were young birds undergoing partial moults. However, in Greenwinged

Pytilias it was adults rather than immature birds that showed irregular moult (Table 3). Other seed-eating passerine species at Ruretse generally showed normal moult patterns and had a more defined moult season.

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Scalyfeathered Finch and nest of Scalyfeathered Finch.

# Biometrics and moult of the Thickbilled Weaver in Pietermaritzburg

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## Introduction

In general, biometric and moult studies on African species are few (Laycock 1982, Craig 1983). Sample sizes given for morphometric measurements in *Roberts' birds of southern Africa* (Maclean 1993) are often very small, and often include museum specimens. Craig (1983) highlighted the need for African bird ringers to publish more from their extensive databases.

The Thickbilled Weaver *Amblyospiza albifrons* is distributed from the Eastern Cape northwestwards along the eastern tropical coastal belt. In southern Africa it extends into the eastern half of the Northern Province, Swaziland, eastern Zimbabwe, and the Okavango and Caprivi regions of Botswana (Craig 1997). It is a common suburban bird and has adapted to a wide range of man-made habitats. Expansions of its range have occurred into the Witwatersrand, and in Zimbabwe (Craig 1997). To date very few studies into the biology of this ubiquitous species have been made, with the notable exception of Laycock's excellent work in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Laycock 1979, 1981, 1982). This study attempts to address the paucity of information available for this species by utilising ringing data collected over a four year period.

## Materials and methods

Thickbilled Weavers were mostly caught at the aviaries of the School of Botany and Zoology, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, between June 1997 and November 2001. Birds often get trapped in enclosures housing suspended cages containing lovebirds. Thickbilled Weavers chew holes into the shade-

cloth walls to get to the fallen sunflower and millet seed discarded by the lovebirds. Hand nets were used to catch these individuals. Thickbilled Weavers were also trapped outside enclosures using a simple walk-in trap baited with sunflower and millet seed. Additional data obtained from opportunistic mist-netting around Pietermaritzburg since 1994 is also included, although this amounted to few records.

Measurements of the wing, tail, culmen and mass were taken for each bird following de Beer *et al.* 2000. Primary moult scores and the presence or absence of a brood patch were also recorded.

## Results

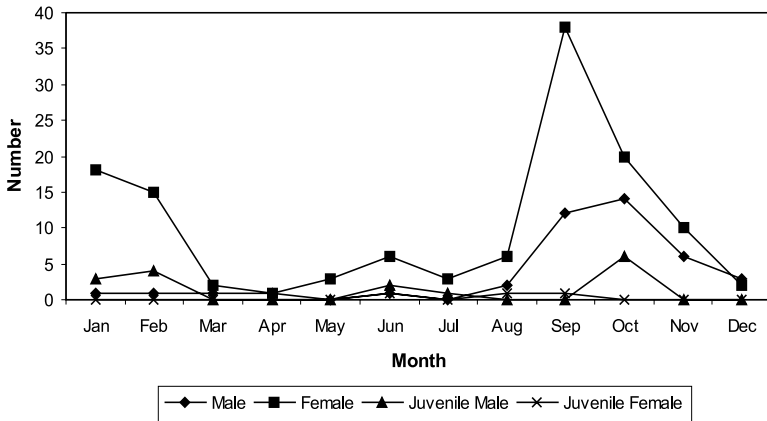
During this study 172 Thickbilled Weavers were caught and ringed. Of these, 48 were males, 98 were females and 26 unsexed. The numbers of sexed birds caught peaked in September to October (Fig. 1). Biometrics are listed in Table 1.

## Moult and breeding

The percentage of individuals caught each month in active primary moult and with an active brood patch is shown in figure 2. This method shows the proportion of the population sampled in moult or breeding at any one time (Newton 1966, Symes *et al.* 2001). Birds were found with brood patches from August to January, with the exception of November, when few birds were caught. Active moult occurred in a narrow period between April and June.

## Retraps and movements

Forty-six birds were retrapped 125 times during this study (recapture rate of 26.7%). Of



**Fig. 1.** Monthly capture rates for all sexed Thickbilled Weavers during this study (Pietermaritzburg, June 1997–November 2001).

these, 30 birds were recaptured twice, 11 birds were recaptured 3 or 4 times, and 2 birds were recaptured 6 or 7 times. Six of the retrapped birds were ringed by Dr David Johnson 5 kilometers away at Darvill Bird Sanctuary. The greatest elapsed time between ringing and recapture is 4 years 2 months.

**Discussion**

Most birds were caught during the breeding season as found by Laycock 1982. Atlas data shows reduced reporting rates in winter when birds flock and move into taller woody vegetation away from breeding grounds (Craig 1997). The sex ratio of sexed birds during this study was 1:2 (male:female). Laycock (1982) recorded varying sex ratios at different times, but in general found ratios of 1:1.

Biometrics for Thickbilled Weavers have not been published in any great detail. Maclean (1993) gives data on 11 males and 9 females, and mostly only gives ranges. Laycock (1982) gives ranges of length for all wing feathers, and states that male feather lengths exceed female feather lengths by 12–15%. Laycock (1982) also states that full grown males weigh more than 48 g and females less than 45 g. Although Laycock also describes various methods of ageing

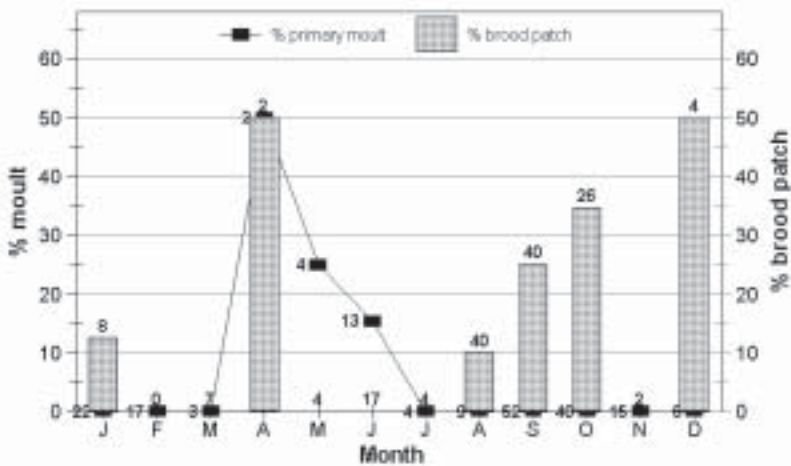
birds using gape color, bill color, and plumage pattern and coloration, we feel it is useful to include biometrics as an additional ageing tool.

**Moult**

Moult in Thickbilled Weavers has been recorded in all months from December to June (Laycock 1982). In our study, birds were only found to be in moult during April, May and June. Laycock’s data included numerous

**Table 1.** Biometric measurements for Thickbilled Weavers, Pietermaritzburg, June 1997–November 2001.

	N	Mean	SE	Min.	Max.
<b>Males:</b>					
Mass (g)	48	51.3	0.6	34.6	57.1
Wing (mm)	48	96.6	0.4	92	104
Tail (mm)	47	71.4	0.4	67	80
Culmen (mm)	48	22.5	0.1	20.5	24.0
<b>Females:</b>					
Mass (g)	98	40.6	0.4	34.1	53.0
Wing (mm)	98	87.9	0.3	79	95
Tail (mm)	98	64.1	0.3	51	71
Culmen (mm)	98	19.6	0.1	17.0	22.5



**Fig. 2.** Occurrence of breeding and moult in the Thickbilled Weaver (Pietermaritzburg, June 1997–November 2001) as expressed by the percentage of birds caught each month with moulting remiges and displaying a brood patch respectively. Sample sizes are shown on the left of the black box for primary moult, and above the bar for brood patch.

museum specimens, as well as data from various different sites. It may be that birds from a single area are more synchronous in their timing of moult than the population as a whole. Synchronous moult in birds from a single area may occur more often than is realised, with most published accounts of moult grouping data of individual species from various localities (Niles 1972, Austin 1978, Hanmer 1978, Laycock 1982, Craig 1983, Underhill & Underhill 1997). This appears strange as both geographical and annual variation in timing of moult within a species is known to occur (Newton 1966, Niles 1972, Austin 1978, Espie *et al.* 1996). Some southern African birds show extended moult periods. In the Rock Pigeon *Columba guinea*, moult has been found throughout the year (Underhill & Underhill 1997). Bronze Mannikins *Spermestes cucullatus* in Sierre Leone were also found in moult all year round (Thompson & Tye 1995).

Moult in this study took place during only three months. Individual birds of some other local species (e.g. Cape Bulbul *Pycnonotus capensis*, European Wheatear *Oenanthe oe-*

*nanthe*, Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*, Natal Robin *Cossypha natalensis* and Starred Robin *Pogonocichla stellata*) also take about three months to complete wing moult (Craig 1983).

### Breeding

Active brood patches were found from August to January (except in November due to low sample size) and on a single bird in April. Laycock (1979) reports the earliest record of breeding in his study as 22 September 1976. Atlas data show breeding from October to March throughout the range of the species in southern Africa (Craig 1997). Lepage (1999) shows breeding from September to February. During our study, moult and breeding did not overlap (with the exception of the single bird in April, which showed no moult).

### Site fidelity and movements

A recapture rate of 26.7% suggests high site fidelity, with many birds returning to the same site on a regular basis. Local movements between feeding sites and/or breeding sites also occurs. Darvill Bird sanctuary, from

where six birds ringed by Dr D. Johnson were retrapped, is a known breeding site for the species. It is possible that birds breeding there were flying the distance of 5 km to our feeding and trapping site.

### Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Dale Forbes and Robyn van Dyk for assisting with this project. Louise Warburton provided useful comments on the manuscript.

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Adult male Thickbilled Weaver head and wing.

# Ring wear in Sociable Weavers *Philetairus socius*

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Bird ringers catch and ring birds for a variety of reasons; all of these, however, contribute to improving our understanding of birds and their biology. The unique numbering system allows us to 'track' individually marked. Critical here is that we should be able to trace individual birds for as long as possible while the birds are alive, and, in some cases, even after birds have died. The inscription on a ring therefore should be clearly legible for at least the lifetime of an individual bird, and the material bearing the inscription should also weather the effects of time and the elements. Corrosion (e.g. by saline water) is one of the factors that may

affect the legibility of ring numbers.

This short note illustrates how physical abrasion specific to the environment and daily habits of the Sociable Weaver can drastically affect the legibility of information on a ring and thus the effectiveness of putting in effort to ring this species.

Recapture data (Table 1) from a flock of 23 Sociable Weavers mistnetted at Sandveld Nature Reserve (27°41'S, 25°42'E), Hoopstad district, Free State, South Africa, revealed interesting results concerning the amount of wear evident in 3.0 mm aluminium (AL) rings, as opposed to a stainless steel (SS) ring of the same size, over a maxi-

**Table 1.** Ring wear in Sociable Weavers retrapped at Sandveld Nature Reserve.

Ring no.	Ringed	Controlled	Elapsed time	State of ring	Material
BC74377	11 July 1997	31 May 2001	3y 10m	good	SS
BD46392	18 September 1997	31 May 2001	3y 8m	worn	AL
BD46399	18 September 1997	31 May 2001	3y 8m	badly worn	AL
BD46400	18 September 1997	31 May 2001	3y 8m	worn	AL
BD46402	18 September 1997	31 May 2001	3y 8m	badly worn	AL
BD46437	18 September 1997	31 May 2001	3y 8m	badly worn	AL
BD46441	18 September 1997	31 May 2001	3y 8m	badly worn	AL
BD47584	18 April 1999	31 May 2001	2y 1m	good	AL
BD47590	18 April 1999	31 May 2001	2y 1m	slightly worn	AL
BD47628	18 April 1999	31 May 2001	2y 1m	slightly worn	AL
BD47649	18 April 1999	31 May 2001	2y 1m	slightly worn	AL
BD47669	18 April 1999	31 May 2001	2y 1m	good	AL
BD47677	18 April 1999	31 May 2001	2y 1m	badly worn	AL
BD47678	18 April 1999	31 May 2001	2y 1m	good	AL
BD68258	18 April 1999	31 May 2001	2y 1m	good	AL
BD68272	18 April 1999	31 May 2001	2y 1m	good	AL
BD68273	18 April 1999	31 May 2001	2y 1m	good	AL
BD68274	18 April 1999	31 May 2001	2y 1m	good	AL
BD68278	18 April 1999	31 May 2001	2y 1m	good	AL
BD54422	28 April 2000	31 May 2001	1y 1m	good	AL
BD54434	28 April 2000	31 May 2001	1y 1m	good	AL
BD54435	28 April 2000	31 May 2001	1y 1m	good	AL
BD54436	28 April 2000	31 May 2001	1y 1m	good	AL

imum period of 3 years and 10 months. Of the 23 birds recaptured, 22 were ringed with AL rings, while a single bird had been ringed using a SS ring.

It is clear from this data that inscriptions on 3.0 mm aluminium rings *may* still be legible two years after ringing. Other rings used for this same period showed severe wear, so that the numbers were barely legible (slightly to badly worn, Table 1). Discrepancy in the wear of AL rings over this period may relate to the different ages of these rings; the rings showing more extensive wear had presumably been purchased some time before those (BD682-series) showing less wear (used by a more recently qualified ringer). Inscriptions on AL rings still present on Sociable Weavers after 3.5 years were very difficult to read, while the number on a SS ring, read 3y 10m after ringing, was still perfectly legible.

This data clearly indicates that AL rings should not be used to ring Sociable Weavers, unless the results derived from ringing these birds are aimed at answering specific questions during a maximum period of two years after ringing only. Any meaningful longer-term studies concerning longevity, survival and inter-colony movements require the use of SS rings.

Sociable Weavers inhabit arid areas with sandy soils. These birds spend much of their time during the day foraging on the ground; abrasion by sand particles may cause minimal wear to AL rings. However, the weavers roost each night and breed in nests constructed of coarse grass stems. While birds would thus use these nests on a daily basis as roosts, the rate at which birds move in and out of the coarse grass entrances of their nests during the breeding season would be substantially higher. The abrasive effect of this nesting material is clearly evident on the AL rings of the Sandveld birds.

Although the use of cheaper AL rings may result in higher numbers of birds being ringed at comparatively lower cost than

when more expensive SS rings are used, the longer-term contribution of such a practice is questionable. Is it worth spending the amount of time, money and effort ringing large numbers of birds with rings of a soft material such as aluminium, which is easily abraded through the normal roosting and nesting behaviour of a species such as the Sociable Weaver? If possible, rather invest in a longer-lasting ring material, which ultimately will pay higher dividends from the point of view of longer-term research objectives.

*Editor's note:*

*Colour rings used on Sociable Weavers also fade quickly or even fall off (Rita Covas pers. comms).*



Nest of Sociable Weavers.

# Legal requirements when exporting bird material out of the Northern Cape, South Africa, to another country

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During recent years the Directorate Conservation and Environment (Northern Cape) has had several requests about the requirements for the export of bird material out of South Africa. Usually skins, feathers, tissue, and/or blood are required for taxonomic, parasitological, and sometimes other biological research. The aim of this document is to clarify the legal requirements regarding the export of such material to another country. Although only of direct relevance to the export of material out of South Africa's Northern Cape province, the conditions are probably the same (or similar) for the other eight provinces.

For the export of material, the following is required:

- (1) Collecting permit.
- (2) Letter from landowner on whose property the material was collected.
- (3) CITES or non-CITES certificate.
- (4) Import permit from country to which material is being exported.
- (5) Export permit.
- (6) Veterinary clearance certificate.

As background the Cape Nature and Environmental Conservation Ordinance, No. 19 of 1974, states the following:

According to **Section 42** any person found in possession of any wild animal or the carcass of any such animal shall be guilty of an offence unless, in the event of (a) the animal having been hunted by him on the land of any other person, he is in possession of the written permission contemplated by section 39, or (b) his having acquired such animal or carcass from any other person, he is in possession of a written document contemplated by section 41.

A 'carcass' can be defined as follows: the whole or any part of the meat (whether dried, smoked, salted, cured or treated in any manner), the head, tooth, horns, shell, scale, tusks, bones, feathers, tail, claw, paw, hoof, skin, hide, hair, viscera or any part whatsoever of the carcass, and includes an egg. Note that this would include a single feather and a blood sample (even a blood smear). For a batch of material (i.e. a number of samples or specimens), one permit would be required (but on this permit the number of samples or specimens would be specified).

According to **Section 39**, subject to the provisions of this ordinance, any owner of land may permit any other person to hunt in accordance with such provisions any wild animal on the land of such owner and to remove any such animal or the carcass of any such animal from such land. However, permission must be granted (in writing) for the person to do so. This letter must include the full names and address of the owner concerned and of the person to whom it is granted, and the number and the species of wild animal, the date or dates and the land in respect of which it is granted. The letter must be signed and dated by the landowner.

**Section 41** states that no person shall donate or sell any wild animal or the carcass of any such animal to any other person unless, when he delivers such animal or carcass to such other person, he furnishes such other person with a written document signed by him reflecting: (a) the full names and address of such first mentioned person; (b) the full names and address of such other person; (c) the number and species of wild animals or carcasses so donated or sold; (d) the date on which such animal or carcass was so donated

or sold, and (e) a statement by him that he has donated or sold such animal or carcass to such other person.

Furthermore, **Section 43** states that every document referred to in sections 39 and 41 shall be retained by the person to whom it was furnished for a period of at least two months from the date on which it was so furnished or while such person is in possession of the wild animal or carcass to which it relates, whichever is the longer period.

According to **Section 44(1)b(ii)** no person shall, without a permit authorising him to do so, export from the Province the carcass of any endangered wild animal or any protected wild animal specified in Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, Washington, 1973. The exporter thus needs a permit for a CITES species and written permission and donation by the landowner for a

non-CITES species, as well as veterinary certificates. The Directorate Conservation and Environment (Northern Cape) does issue non-CITES certificates for trophies of game species that are being exported overseas, but to date no permits have been issued for non-CITES birds, reptiles and insects.

A State Veterinarian has to issue veterinary permits/certificates prior to the export of live animals as well as carcasses. The procedure is usually for the applicant to apply for a permit from the country of import, so that they can stipulate their requirements. South Africa then adheres to the requirements stipulated by the country of import. The following people at the Department of Agriculture in Pretoria can be contacted for additional information: Alec Naidoo (tel. 012-808 0952; alecn@nda.agric.za), Dr Bronkhorst (tel. 012-319 7444) or Celia Dickenson (tel. 012-319 6000).



Adult and juvenile European Swallow in the hand. There are currently requests for feathers of swallows.

# Reports

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## **Wakkerstroom National Ringing Training Course, 1–8 December 2001**

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This event was held for the second time at BirdLife South Africa's Wetland Centre at Wakkerstroom, Mpumalanga, and was as successful as the previous one held here (December 2000) and the first one held at Witsand Nature Reserve in the Northern Cape (March 2000). The course was attended by 35 participants, including ringers and trainees, coming from as far as Zimbabwe and Germany, as well as from different parts of South Africa. Every morning attendees left at around 4 am to put up mistnets for the morning session. Ringing occurred at the BirdLife South Africa wetland, forest and scrub areas on nearby farms, at bridges within 10 km or so where Cliff Swallows breed, and at a Bald Ibis colony 40 km north of Wakkerstroom. Cliff Swallow colonies around Wakkerstroom were enthusiastically tackled again, with many being retrapped from the ringing sessions exactly one year ago. Dries Nel again led an outing to ring Bald Ibis chicks with metal and colour rings. Birders and ringers in KwaZulu-Natal and

Mpumalanga are requested to look out for these colour ringed birds and to report any sightings to SAFRING. Pied Starlings around the BirdLife homestead at Wakkerstroom have also been colour ringed by Steven Piper.

A total of 1523 birds was ringed, compared to nearly 1800 in 2000 at Wakkerstroom (Table 1, overleaf). The effort and specific sites varied in the 2 years. The number of ringers and trainees was 35 in 2001 instead of nearly 60 of 2000, thus resulting in a lower total number of birds ringed. The top five birds ringed in both years were the same, i.e. Red Bishop, Cliff Swallow, Masked Weaver, African Marsh Warbler and Cape White-eye, in descending order. The numbers of these five species were higher in 2000, except for the African Marsh Warbler because of Kobie Raijmaker's superb efforts at targeting warblers more effectively in 2001.

If you are interested in attending a ringing workshop, watch our web page for details ([www.aviandemographyunit.org.za](http://www.aviandemographyunit.org.za)).

**Table 1.** Numbers of birds ringed during the 2001 Ringing Training Course compared to numbers ringed during the 2000 Course.

SAFRING no.	Species	'01	'00	SAFRING no.	Species	'01	'00
82	Bald Ibis <i>Geronticus calvus</i>	5	5	510	Banded Martin <i>Riparia cincta</i>	2	4
84	Hadedda Ibis <i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>		1	517	Forktailed Drongo <i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>		2
96	Yellowbilled Duck <i>Anas undulata</i>	1		521	Blackheaded Oriole <i>Oriolus larvatus</i>	1	1
99	Hottentot Teal <i>Anas hottentota</i>	1		527	Southern Black Tit <i>Parus niger</i>	2	
130	Blackshouldered Kite <i>Elanus caeruleus</i>		1	542	Bush Blackcap <i>Lioptilus nigricapillus</i>	11	20
152	Jackal Buzzard <i>Buteo rufofuscus</i>	1		545	Blackeyed Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>	14	27
154	Steppe Buzzard <i>Buteo buteo</i>		2	551	Sombre Bulbul <i>Andropadus importunus</i>		2
189	Common Quail <i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	4		552	Kurrichane Thrush <i>Turdus libonyana</i>		1
247	Wattled Plover <i>Vanellus senegallus</i>		1	553	Olive Thrush <i>Turdus olivaceus</i>	9	17
316	Cape Turtle Dove <i>Streptopelia capicola</i>	1	2	569	Buffstreaked Chat <i>Oenanthe bifasciata</i>		1
317	Laughing Dove <i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	4	3	573	Mocking Chat <i>Thamnolaea cinnamomeiventris</i>		1
322	Cinnamon Dove <i>Aplopelia larvata</i>	2	3	575	Anteating Chat <i>Myrmecocichla formicivora</i>	5	1
343	Redchested Cuckoo <i>Cuculus solitarius</i>	1		576	Stonechat <i>Saxicola torquata</i>	3	
344	Black Cuckoo <i>Cuculus clamosus</i>		2	578	Chorister Robin <i>Cossypha dichroa</i>	11	5
351	Klaas's Cuckoo <i>Chrysococcyx klaas</i>	1		581	Cape Robin <i>Cossypha caffra</i>	33	55
352	Diederik Cuckoo <i>Chrysococcyx caprius</i>	2		589	Starred Robin <i>Pogonocichla stellata</i>	5	26
367	Cape Eagle Owl <i>Bubo capensis</i>	2	2	595	Garden Warbler <i>Sylvia borin</i>	2	1
368	Spotted Eagle Owl <i>Bubo africanus</i>	4		599	Willow Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	5	10
383	Whiterumped Swift <i>Apus caffer</i>	10	17	604	Cape Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus gracilirostris</i>	18	13
385	Little Swift <i>Apus affinis</i>	1	2	606	African Marsh Warbler <i>Acrocephalus baeticatus</i>	132	84
390	Speckled Mousebird <i>Colius striatus</i>	11	6	607	European Marsh Warbler <i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>		3
395	Giant Kingfisher <i>Ceryle maxima</i>	2		608	European Sedge Warbler <i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	4	2
397	Malachite Kingfisher <i>Alcedo cristata</i>	5	4	609	African Sedge Warbler <i>Bradypterus baboecala</i>	39	24
431	Blackcollared Barbet <i>Lybius torquatus</i>	4	10	610	Barratt's Warbler <i>Bradypterus barratti</i>		7
440	Greater Honeyguide <i>Indicator indicator</i>	1		618	Grassbird <i>Sphenoecus afer</i>	4	1
442	Lesser Honeyguide <i>Indicator minor</i>	1		622	Barthroated Apalis <i>Apalis thoracica</i>	9	14
443	Sharpbilled Honeyguide <i>Prodotiscus regulus</i>	1	3	627	Bleating Warbler <i>Camaroptera brachyura</i>		1
445	Ground Woodpecker <i>Geocolaptes olivaceus</i>	1		629	Fantailed Cisticola <i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	1	26
450	Cardinal Woodpecker <i>Dendropicos fuscescens</i>		2	634	Ayres' Cisticola <i>Cisticola ayresii</i>	1	3
452	Olive Woodpecker <i>Mesopicos griseocephalus</i>	3	2	635	Palecrowned Cisticola <i>Cisticola brunnescens</i>	2	9
453	Redthroated Wryneck <i>Jynx ruficollis</i>	1		637	Neddicky Cisticola <i>Cisticola fulvicapilla</i>	1	1
474	Spikeheeled Lark <i>Chersomanes albofasciata</i>		1	642	Rattling Cisticola <i>Cisticola chiniana</i>		1
493	European Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	18	1	646	Levaillant's Cisticola <i>Cisticola tinniens</i>	28	13
495	Whitethroated Swallow <i>Hirundo albicularis</i>	18	10	648	Lazy Cisticola <i>Cisticola aberrans</i>	2	3
502	Greater Striped Swallow <i>Hirundo cucullata</i>	4	5				
504	South African Cliff Swallow <i>Hirundo spilodera</i>	196	305				
506	Rock Martin <i>Hirundo fuligula</i>	2					
508	Sand Martin <i>Riparia riparia</i>	2					

Table 1. continued.

SAFRING no.	Species	'01	'00	SAFRING no.	Species	'01	'00
1049	Drakensberg Prinia <i>Prinia hypoxantha</i>	3	8	751	Malachite Sunbird <i>Nectarinia famosa</i>	8	2
655	Dusky Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa adusta</i>	1		758	Greater Doublecollared Sunbird <i>Nectarinia afra</i>	2	8
665	Fiscal Flycatcher <i>Sigelus silens</i>	1	2	760	Lesser Doublecollared Sunbird <i>Nectarinia chalybea</i>	6	9
666	Yellow Warbler <i>Chloropeta natalensis</i>	5	3	772	Black Sunbird <i>Nectarinia amethystina</i>		4
671	Yellowthroated Warbler <i>Phylloscopus ruficapillus</i>	2	7	775	Cape White-eye <i>Zosterops pallidus</i>	54	68
672	Cape Batis <i>Batis capensis</i>	9	10	787	Southern Greyheaded Sparrow <i>Passer diffusus</i>	4	1
682	Paradise Flycatcher <i>Terpsiphone viridis</i>	7	9	788	Yellowthroated Sparrow <i>Petronia superciliaris</i>	1	1
686	Cape Wagtail <i>Motacilla capensis</i>	2		799	Cape Weaver <i>Ploceus capensis</i>	48	43
688	Longtailed Wagtail <i>Motacilla clara</i>	2		803	Masked Weaver <i>Ploceus velatus</i>	149	110
692	Grassveld Pipit <i>Anthus cinnamomeus</i>	1	2	805	Redbilled Quelea <i>Quelea quelea</i>		12
701	Yellowbreasted Pipit <i>Hemimacronyx chloris</i>		3	808	Red Bishop <i>Euplectes orix</i>	422	550
703	Orangethroated Longclaw <i>Macronyx capensis</i>	2	2	812	Golden Bishop <i>Euplectes afer</i>	5	19
707	Fiscal Shrike <i>Lanius collaris</i>	5	12	813	Redcollared Widow <i>Euplectes ardens</i>	6	11
708	Redbacked Shrike <i>Lanius collurio</i>	1		816	Redshouldered Widow <i>Euplectes axillaris</i>	49	18
709	Southern Boubou <i>Laniarius ferrugineus</i>	1	3	818	Longtailed Widow <i>Euplectes progné</i>	46	28
712	Puffback <i>Dryoscopus cubla</i>	1		833	Bluebilled Firefinch <i>Lagonosticta rubricata</i>	1	2
717	Olive Bush Shrike <i>Telophorus olivaceus</i>	3	1	843	Common Waxbill <i>Estrilda astrild</i>	12	23
722	Bokmakierie <i>Telophorus zeylonus</i>	1	2	846	Pintailed Whydah <i>Vidua macroura</i>	3	4
734	Indian Myna <i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	1		854	Cuckoo Finch <i>Anomalospiza imberbis</i>	1	
735	Wattled Starling <i>Creatophora cinerea</i>	1		857	Cape Canary <i>Serinus canicollis</i>	6	8
736	Plumcoloured Starling <i>Cinnyricinclus leucogaster</i>		3	858	Forest Canary <i>Serinus scotops</i>	2	7
745	Redwinged Starling <i>Onychognathus morio</i>	1		859	Yelloweyed Canary <i>Serinus mozambicus</i>		2
746	Pied Starling <i>Spreo bicolor</i>	6	16	874	Goldenbreasted Bunting <i>Emberiza flaviventris</i>		3
				<b>Total ringed</b>		<b>1523</b>	<b>1795</b>



# Report on the 2000–2001 ringing year

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The period covered in this report is 1 July 2000–30 June 2001. The ringing effort in southern Africa has again increased, with a total of 82 792 birds ringed compared to 65 981 in the previous year (Table 1; *Safring News* 29: 90–92). The total was made up of 75 415 free-flying birds and 7377 nestlings. The high number of birds ringed is largely due to the 20 000 penguins ringed as a result of the *Treasure* oil spill. Again the quelea numbers are similar to the previous year's total. The number of species ringed was 554, one more than the previous year. These figures were compiled at the end of January instead of the usual December, meaning that the data is slightly more up to date than in previous years, although there are always a few ringers who submit data a few years late.

Most birds were ringed in the Western

Cape (Table 1), but the unusually high figure of 33 000 birds is due to the ringing of the 20 000 *Treasure* penguins. Ringers from outside the Western Cape helped ring these birds, as did Avian Demography Unit staff and local ringers (*Safring News* 29: 88–89). The data was all ascribed to SANCCOB, however, since the ringing took place there, putting them at the top of the list (Table 2). One new addition is Rita Covas who ringed nearly 1500 Sociable Weavers for her PhD thesis, which she has now completed. The Marine and Coastal Management team and Pete Bartlett from Ichaboe Island, Namibia, ringed seabirds. The other ringers in Table 2 are general mistnetters, although some of them also ring raptors with balchatri traps. Top ringers of nestling and free-flying raptors are listed (Tables 3a and b respectively).

**Table 1.** Geographical distribution of ringing effort in the 2000–2001 ringing year.

Province/ country	Number of ringers	Number of species ringed	Number of birds ringed	Average no. of birds per ringer
Western Cape	32	198	33 023	1032
Gauteng	33	294	17 299	524
Namibia	17	214	7337	432
Kwa-Zulu Natal	11	236	4049	368
Botswana	6	141	3810	635
Eastern Cape	15	150	3689	246
North West	5	137	2743	549
Northern Province	6	167	2537	423
Free State	8	137	2511	314
Northern Cape	5	50	2138	428
Mpumalanga	4	154	1997	499
Zimbabwe	6	176	1569	262
Swaziland	1	20	90	90
<b>Totals</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>554</b>	<b>82 792</b>	<b>556</b>

**Table 2.** Top 20 ringers and ringing groups in the 2000–2001 ringing year for all species.

Ringer	Province/ country	No. of birds
SANCCOB	Western Cape	20 318
Hennie de Klerk	Gauteng	2717
Bob Ellis	Western Cape	2525
Rihann Geysler	Gauteng	2127
Tim Osborne	Namibia	2107
Marine and Coastal Management	Western Cape	2038
Kobie Raijmakers	Gauteng	1761
Margaret McCall	Western Cape	1711
Riann Marais	Gauteng	1504
Rita Marais	North West	1497
Rita Covas	Northern Cape	1473
Hans Meevis	Botswana	1436
Dirk Heinrich	Namibia	1401
Tony Tree	Eastern Cape	1391
Dawie Kleynhans	Free State	1287
Gerrie Grobler	Northern Province	1281
Herman & Zephné Bernitz	Mpumalanga	1273
Peter Thornton	Gauteng	1176
Stephanie Tyler	Botswana	1143
Pete Bartlett	Namibia	1141

**Table 3.** Top ringers and ringing groups in the 2000–2001 ringing year for raptors.

a) Nestlings		
Ringer	Province/ country	No. of birds ringed
Abrie Maritz	Northern Cape	180
Mark Anderson	Northern Cape	78
Kevin Mitchell	Zimbabwe	64
Liz Komen	Namibia	58
Tim Osborne	Namibia	56
b) Free-flying raptors		
Ringer	Province/ country	No. of birds ringed
Francois Taljaard	Northern Cape	163
Liz Komen	Namibia	118
Abrie Maritz	Northern Cape	108
Herman & Zephné Bernitz	Mpumalanga	90
Dirk Heinrich	Namibia	81

**Table 4.** The most frequently ringed birds for the 2000–2001 ringing year: terrestrial species.

Rank	Species	Total ringed	Previous rank
1	Masked Weaver <i>Ploceus velatus</i>	4912	3
2	Red Bishop <i>Euplectes orix</i>	4618	2
3	Redbilled Quelea <i>Quelea quelea</i>	4021	5
4	Cape White-eye <i>Zosterops pallidus</i>	2986	4
5	European Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	2941	1
6	Redheaded Finch <i>Amadina erythrocephala</i>	2283	12
7	Cape Weaver <i>Ploceus capensis</i>	1997	6
8	Sociable Weaver <i>Philetairus socius</i>	1563	11
9	Laughing Dove <i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	1117	7
10	Blue Waxbill <i>Uraeginthus angolensis</i>	1082	9
11	Cape Sparrow <i>Passer melanurus</i>	924	8
12	African Marsh Warbler <i>Acrocephalus baeticatus</i>	800	10
13	Blackeyed Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>	712	14
14	Cape Robin <i>Cossypha caffra</i>	693	
15	House Sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i>	652	15
16	Common Waxbill <i>Estrilda astrild</i>	632	16
17	Bronze Mannikin <i>Spermestes cucullatus</i>	614	20
18	Olive Thrush <i>Turdus olivaceus</i>	593	18
19	South African Cliff Swallow <i>Hirundo spilodera</i>	591	
20	Redeyed Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus nigricans</i>	567	

The European Swallow dropped in numbers and rank from the previous ringing year (Table 4). Unfortunately the swallows departed from the major roosts in Bloemfontein, Roodepoort and Middelburg early in 2001, resulting in a lower catch rate. Red-headed Finch moved high up the list due to

intensive ringing of this species by Dawie Kleynhans, Hennie de Klerk and Kobie Rajmaker in their gardens.

African Penguins lead the seabirds list (Table 5). Raptor nestlings and free-flying raptors are listed in tables 6a and 6b respectively.

**Table 5.** The most frequently ringed birds for the 2000–2001 ringing year: seabirds.

Rank	Species	Total ringed
1	African Penguin <i>Spheniscus demersus</i>	21 020
2	Cape Gannet <i>Morus capensis</i>	2932
3	Swift Tern <i>Sterna bergii</i>	575
4	Antarctic Tern <i>Sterna vittata</i>	559
5	Kelp Gull <i>Larus dominicanus</i>	434
6	Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i>	351
7	Hartlaub's Gull <i>Larus hartlaubii</i>	213
8	Roseate Tern <i>Sterna dougallii</i>	182
9	Caspian Tern <i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	28
10	Cape Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax capensis</i>	20

**Table 6.** The most frequently ringed birds for the 2000–2001 ringing year: raptors.

a) Raptor nestlings			b) Free-flying raptors		
Rank	Species	Total ringed	Rank	Species	Total ringed
1	Whitebacked Vulture <i>Gyps africanus</i>	150	1	Pale Chanting Goshawk <i>Melierax canorus</i>	218
2	Barn Owl <i>Tyto alba</i>	122	2	Steppe Buzzard <i>Buteo buteo</i>	101
3	Spotted Eagle Owl <i>Bubo africanus</i>	63	3	Spotted Eagle Owl <i>Bubo africanus</i>	100
4	Rock Kestrel <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	42	4	Barn Owl <i>Tyto alba</i>	92
5	Pale Chanting Goshawk <i>Melierax canorus</i>	37	5	Rock Kestrel <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	82
6	Black Harrier <i>Circus maurus</i>	35	6	Jackal Buzzard <i>Buteo rufofuscus</i>	70
7	Secretarybird <i>Sagittarius serpentarius</i>	32	7	Blackshouldered Kite <i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	68
8	Peregrine Falcon <i>Falco peregrinus</i>	31	8	Greater Kestrel <i>Falco rupicoloides</i>	56
9	Lappetfaced Vulture <i>Torgos tracheliotos</i>	28	9	Pearlspotted Owl <i>Glaucidium perlatum</i>	41
10	Lizard Buzzard <i>Kaupifalco monogrammicus</i>	18	10	Lesser Kestrel <i>Falco naumanni</i>	26

# Report on recoveries received at SAFRING: July 2000–June 2001

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This report is a summary of recoveries reported to SAFRING from July 2000 to June 2001. There were 294 recoveries and 3914 retraps (3425 individual birds) were processed. These retraps include birds retrapped one day after ringing or at any time thereafter. As many retraps as possible are processed at SAFRING but it is impossible to keep up with all of them. Preference is given to data received electronically.

The format is similar to that of previous reports. All foreign recoveries and retraps are listed as well as selected local recoveries and retraps. The common and scientific species

names are listed, followed by the numbers of recoveries and retraps reported. The first line of each listed recovery gives the ring number, bird's age at ringing, date of ringing, and place of ringing. Abbreviations are used for the South African provinces. The second line indicates the state of the bird (e.g. cause of death), date and place of the ring recovery, the elapsed time (to the nearest month) and distance between ringing and recovery.

Where a recovery has provided the greatest elapsed time or distance for that particular species in the SAFRING databank, this is indicated in italics.

## FOREIGN RECOVERIES AND NOTABLE LOCAL RECOVERIES (RECOVERIES AND RETRAP IN THIS RINGING YEAR)

### **King Penguin** *Aptenodytes patagonicus* (0 recoveries, 3 retraps)

H02126	Adult	07/11/1987	Delta Kop, Marion Island			
	Control	22/03/2001	Possession Island	13y 4m	1077 km	
H01612	Adult	06/12/1984	Marion Island			
	Control	15/07/2000	Possession Island	15y 7m	1070 km	
	Control	22/03/2001	Possession Island	16y 4m	1070 km	

### **Wandering Albatross** *Diomedea exulans* (2, 0)

5187326	Nestling	15/10/1998	Bird Island, South Georgia			
	Longline	13/10/2000	Off Agulhas Bank, W Cape	2y 0m	4804 km	
J11898	Nestling	07/08/1996	Goney Plain, Marion Island			
	Dead	23/09/2000	Waipapakauri, New Zealand	4y 2m	9880 km	

### **Southern Giant Petrel** *Macronectes giganteus* (1, 0)

13201234	Nestling	01/02/1998	Macquarie Island, Tasmania			
	Dead	27/09/2000	Langbaai beach, N Cape	2y 8m	9969 km	

### **Northern Giant Petrel** *Macronectes halli* (1, 0)

13203344	Nestling	13/01/1999	Macquarie Island, Tasmania			
	Dead	10/02/2001	Rooiduin, W Cape	2y 1m	9686 km	

**European Storm Petrel** *Hydrobates pelagicus* (1, 0)

2472743	Adult	15/08/1997	Paraidh head, Scotland		
	Dead	29/03/2001	At sea, off PE, E Cape	3y 7m	10 691 km

*Greatest distance for this species in SAFRING's database.*

**White Pelican** *Pelecanus onocrotalus* (1, 1)

H01008	Nestling	20/12/1972	Walvis Bay, Namibia		
	Resighted	09/11/2000	Swakopmund, Namibia	27y 11m	24 km

*Greatest elapsed time for this species in SAFRING's database.*

**White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia* (4, 2)

B05749	Nestling	23/06/1988	Griebo, Germany		
	Resighted	08/01/2001	Fish R, E Cape	12y 7m	9402 km
CE83287	Nestling	23/06/1988	Griebo, Germany		
	Dead	30/10/2000	Lourens R, W Cape	16y 2m	9960 km
D00198	Nestling	26/06/1998	Zagelsdorf, Germany		
	Dead	19/02/2001	Barkley East, E Cape	2y 8m	9321 km
E00667	Nestling	05/06/1999	Immelborn, Germany		
	Collison	15/02/2001	Konstacia farm, Natal	1y 8m	9052 km
H00771	Nestling	01/07/1999	Sausedlitz, Germany		
	Resighted	14/01/2001	Nachtwach farm, W Cape	1y 7m	9608 km
Z 101	Nestling	27/06/2000	Cadraze, Slovenia		
	Collison	31/12/2000	Braeside Cottage, E Cape	0y 6m	8752 km

*In addition there are also the satellite records of the White Stork juveniles ringed at Tygerberg Zoo. (The data have not yet been added to SAFRING's database; see <http://www.uct.ac.za/depts/stats/adu/wstork00.htm>).*

**Whitebacked Vulture** *Gyps africanus* (6, 1)

G21892	Nestling	29/09/2000	Benfontein Farm, N Cape		
	Poisoned	08/06/2001	Stillerus, Namibia	0y 8m	1426 km

*Greatest distance for this species in SAFRING's database.*

**Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo* (10, 18)

4382181	Nestling	20/06/2000	Vastmanland, Sweden		
	Control	19/11/2000	Lourens R, W Cape	0y 5m	10 409 km
4386338	Nestling	05/07/2000	Lungersbaden, Sweden		
	Control	10/11/2000	Lourens R, W Cape	0y 4m	10 384 km
4442809	Nestling	16/06/1999	Vastra Frolunda, Sweden		
	Control	30/10/2000	Lourens R, W Cape	1y 5m	10 215 km
7083110	Nestling	14/06/1987	Sandoen, Denmark		
	Dead	19/01/2001	Infanta, W Cape	13y 7m	10 155 km
99Z3056	7–12m	29/08/1999	Zeebrugge, Belgium		
	Dead	20/04/2001	Cannon Rocks, E Cape	1y 8m	9728 km

99Z5717	2–3y Control	19/09/2000 24/11/2000	Zeebrugge, Belgium Lourens R, W Cape	0y 2m	9619 km
AT055686	Adult Dead	26/06/1989 16/12/2000	Lahti, Finland Lourens R, W Cape	11y 6m	10 591 km
AT083401	Juvenile Control	16/07/1986 01/09/2000	Porvoo Mlk, Finland Bird Island, E Cape	14y 2m	10 461 km
AT092557	Nestling Control	19/06/1987 26/11/2000	Sauvo, Finland Strand, W Cape	13y 5m	10 506 km
AT111818	Juvenile Dead	11/07/1989 18/01/2001	Pasala, Finland Sandwich Harbour, Namibia	11y 6m	9686 km
AT136668	Nestling Control	06/07/2000 28/03/2001	Kotka, Finland Kabeljousriviermond, E Cape	0y 9m	10 520 km
AT140209	Juvenile Control	30/06/1994 30/10/2000	Asikkala, Finland Lourens R, W Cape	6y 4m	10 610 km
AT149168	Juvenile Control	26/06/1996 11/10/2000	Helsinki, Finland Lourens R, W Cape	4y 4m	10 489 km
AT152888	Nestling Control	30/06/2000 28/03/2001	Vammala, Finland Kabeljousriviermond, E Cape	0y 9m	10 613 km
AT156770	Juvenile Control	11/07/1997 24/11/2000	Pernaja, Finland Lourens R, W Cape	3y 5m	10 510 km
AT157946	Juvenile Control	21/06/1997 15/03/2001	Karjalohja, Finland Kabeljous riviermond, E Cape	3y 9m	10 477 km
AT165080	Juvenile Control	03/07/1999 09/12/2000	Sipoo, Finland Lourens R, W Cape	1y 5m	10 504 km
AT168567	Juvenile Collison	02/07/1999 16/08/2000	Virolahti, Finland Wadrif Saltpan, W Cape	1y 2m	10 341km
AT169320	Nestling Dead	24/06/1999 02/11/2000	Pernaja, Finland Port Alfred, E Cape	1y 4m	10 437 km
AT169936	Juvenile Control	19/06/2000 02/12/2000	Helsinki, Finland Lourens R, W Cape	0y 5m	10 488 km
AT173421	Juvenile Control	24/06/2000 02/12/2000	Velkua, Finland Lourens R, W Cape	0y 5m	10 516 km
AT178440	Nestling Dead	02/07/2000 30/05/2001	Valkeakoski, Finland Hentiesbaai, Namibia	0y 11m	9301 km
H178239	Nestling Dead	08/06/1986 01/12/2000	Putkelaid, Estonia Malgas Island, W Cape	14y 6m	10 194 km
H233929	Unknown Control	02/07/1991 24/08/2000	Kihnu, Estonia Bird Island, E Cape	9y 2m	10 226 km

NA001727	Adult Dead	30/05/1993 22/10/2000	Kirr, Germany Swakop R mouth, Namibia	7y 5m	8575 km
NA032782	Nestling Dead	12/06/1997 08/01/2001	Kirr, Germany Elandsbaai, W Cape	3y 7m	9655 km
P42476	Nestling Control	02/07/1990 18/08/2000	Umurga, Latvia Bird Island, E Cape	10y 2m	10 159 km

**Arctic Tern** *Sterna paradisaea* (1, 0)

H267028	Nestling Dead	03/07/1996 17/03/2001	Kihnu Laiud, Estonia Bird Island, W Cape	4y 8m	10 051 km
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**Sandwich Tern** *Sterna sandvicensis* (2, 4)

5123801	Nestling Control	28/05/1998 16/12/2000	Varo, Sweden Lourens R, W Cape	2y 7m	10 179 km
DB35215	Nestling Control	19/06/1997 24/11/2000	Inner Farne, UK Lourens R, W Cape	3y 5m	10 160 km
DK22628	Nestling Control	01/07/1989 27/02/2001	Muckleskerry, Scotland Lourens R, W Cape	11y 8m	10 510 km
DK56367	Nestling Control	24/06/1991 27/02/2001	Ogilby Island, Northern Ireland Lourens R, W Cape	9y 8m	10 128 km
MH24323	Nestling Dead	25/06/1995 17/11/2000	Aniland, Estonia Swakopmund, Namibia	5y 5m	9036 km
XX97882	Nestling Dead	09/06/1973 02/11/2000	Sands of Forvie, Scotland Saldanha, W Cape	27y 5m	10 106 km

**Damara Tern** *Sterna balaenarum* (0, 1)

F44378	Nestling Control	16/12/1999 15/10/2000	Struisbaai, W Cape Bouche Du Roy, Benin	0y 10m	4948 km
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*This is the first control of this species. It confirms the migration of this tern from southern Africa to West Africa (see Africa – Birds & Birding 6(3): 19).*

**Whitewinged Tern** *Chlidonias leucopterus* (1, 0)

BC40639	Adult Dead	01/02/2000 21/09/2000	Strand, W Cape Kitgum, Uganda	0y 8m	4412 km
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*First recovery from its migration along Rift Valley (see Bird Numbers 9(2): 23).*

**Greenspotted Dove** *Turtur chalcospilos* (0, 1)

E22720	Juvenile Control	18/05/1996 28/10/2000	Double Drift, E Cape Double Drift, E Cape	4y 5m	0 km
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**Diederik Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx caprius* (0, 3)

CC33193	Adult Control	20/03/1999 04/02/2001	Darvill, Natal Darvill, Natal	1y 11m	0 km
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**European Nightjar** *Caprimulgus europaeus* (0, 1)

E20860	Adult	31/12/1999	Kongolwane, Natal		
	Control	30/12/2000	Kongolwane, Natal	1y 0m	0 km

*First control of this species in SAFRING's database.*

**European Swift** *Apus apus* (1, 0)

N52625	1–2y	24/06/2000	Pepinster, Belgium		
	Trapped	10/02/2001	Nathenje, Malawi	0y 8m	7691 km

**Malachite Kingfisher** *Alcedo cristate* (1, 13)

E25723	Adult	31/05/1997	Roodekrans, Gauteng		
	Control	02/12/2000	Roodekrans, Gauteng	3y 6m	0 km

**Redbilled Hornbill** *Tockus erythrorhynchus* (0, 13)

PA02607	Adult	28/04/2000	House D'nyala, N Prov.		
	Control	20/05/2001	House D'nyala, N Prov.	1y 1m	0 km

**Pied Barbet** *Tricholaema leucomelas* (0, 49)

CV08268	Adult	24/01/1997	Durbanville, W Cape		
	Control	28/12/2000	Durbanville, W Cape	3y 11m	0 km

**Cardinal Woodpecker** *Dendropicos fuscescens* (0, 1)

CC02979	Adult	06/10/1996	Spioenkop, Natal		
	Control	25/03/2001	Spioenkop, Natal	4y 6m	0 km

**European Swallow** *Hirundo rustica* (5, 19)

154850J	Adult	26/08/1999	Tuusula, Finland		
	Control	08/03/2001	Bloemfontein, Free State	1y 6m	9960 km
228503J	7–12m	25/08/2000	Hameenkyrö, Finland		
	Control	07/03/2001	Middelburg, Mpumulanga	0y 6m	9726 km
274430J	1–2y	13/08/2000	Suomela, Finland		
	Control	17/03/2001	Middelburg, Mpumulanga	0y 7m	9710 km
P590687	Immature	20/08/2000	Pitglassie, Scotland		
	Dead	12/01/2001	Kariega Game Park, E Cape	0y 5m	10 547 km
VH18758	0–6m	16/09/1999	Ventes Ragas, Lithuania		
	Dead	03/12/2000	Ellisras, Northern Prov.	1y 3m	8804 km
X976166	Juvenile	29/08/2000	Lempaala, Finland		
	Control	03/02/2001	Roodepoort, Gauteng	0y 5m	9723 km
AF29713	Adult	18/02/1999	Universitas, Free State		
	Collison	21/03/2001	Powys, Wales	2y 1m	9538 km
AF51350	Adult	26/02/1999	Universitas, Free State		
	Control	08/03/2001	Universitas, Free State	2y 0m	0 km
AF67190	7–12m	18/01/2000	Universitas, Free State		
	Control	31/07/2000	Hewer Hill, UK	0y 6m	9732 km

AF96924	Adult Control	01/03/2000 19/04/2001	Universitas, Free State L'érée, Guernse, UK	2y 0m	9205 km
AF96937	Adult Control	01/03/2000 11/06/2001	Universitas, Free State Near Strokestow, UK	1y 3m	9789 km
AF98572	7–12m Dead	19/02/2000 17/08/2000	Universitas, Free State Punnett's Town, UK	0y 6m	9258 km
AF98654	7–12m Dead	21/02/2000 10/06/2001	Universitas, Free State Honington, UK	1y 4m	9422 km

**Forktailed Drongo** *Dicrurus adsimilis* (1, 0)

CC31404	Adult Drowned	10/04/1998 09/01/2001	Roberts Ranch, NW Prov. Roberts Ranch, NW Prov.	2y 9m	2 km
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**Blackeyed Bulbul** *Pycnonotus barbatus* (2, 37)

BB42940	Adult Control	14/11/1987 10/12/2000	Marionwood, Natal Marionwood, Natal	13y 1m	0 km
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*Greatest elapsed time for this species in SAFRING's database.***Stripecheeked Bulbul** *Andropadus milanjensis* (2, 5)

BB36444	Adult Control	15/11/1986 05/06/2001	Seldomseen, Zimbabwe Seldomseen, Zimbabwe	14y 7m	0 km
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**Orange Thrush** *Zoothera gurneyi* (0, 7)

BB91189	Imm Control	09/05/1992 09/01/2001	Seldomseen, Zimbabwe Seldomseen, Zimbabwe	8y 8m	0 km
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*Greatest elapsed time for this species in SAFRING's database.***Cape Robin** *Cossypha caffra* (3, 94)

BB91165	Adult Control	28/08/1991 13/03/2001	Seldomseen, Zimbabwe Seldomseen, Zimbabwe	9y 7m	0 km
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**Garden Warbler** *Sylvia borin* (0, 2)

AF49837	Adult Control	29/01/2000 20/12/2000	Hillside, Zimbabwe Hillside, Zimbabwe	0y 11m	0 km
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**Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus* (0, 4)

X57888	Adult Control	26/12/1998 18/11/2000	Hillside, Zimbabwe Hillside, Zimbabwe	1y 11m	0 km
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**Cape Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus gracilirostris* (0, 80)

F56221	Adult Control	16/09/1995 30/09/2000	Bishop's Glen, Free State Bishop's Glen, Free State	5y 1m	0 km
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**African Marsh Warbler** *Acrocephalus baeticatus* (0, 161)

W09165	Adult Control	13/04/1996 03/03/2001	Bishop's Glen, Free State Bishop's Glen, Free State	4y 11m	0 km
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**European Marsh Warbler** *Acrocephalus palustris* (0, 3)

6999616	1–2y	03/08/1999	Grembergen, Belgium		
	Control	03/03/2001	Francistown, Botswana	1y 7m	8359 km
	Control	24/03/2001	Francistown, Botswana	1y 8m	8359 km

**Black Flycatcher** *Melaenornis pammelaina* (0, 3)

F01742	Adult	15/09/1993	Mitsasa, Mutare, Zimbabwe		
	Control	26/08/2000	Mitsasa, Mutare, Zimbabwe	6y 11m	0 km

**Fiscal Flycatcher** *Sigelus silens* (0, 12)

F29767	Adult	26/07/1993	Bisley Valley, Natal		
	Control	29/07/2000	Bisley Valley, Natal	7y 0m	0 km

**Indian Myna** *Acridotheres tristis* (1, 0)

D24932	Adult	04/09/1999	Club Ranch, N Province		
	Dead	18/10/2000	Groenkloof, Gauteng	1y 1m	381 km

*Greatest distance moved for this species in SAFRING's database.*

**Cape White-eye** *Zosterops pallidus* (5, 151)

GA05926	Adult	23/08/2000	Hazelmere, Natal		
	Dead	18/12/2000	Ladysmith, Natal	0y 4m	135 km

*Released after kept in captivity, see Afring News 30: 42-43.*

**Sociable Weaver** *Philetairus socius* (0, 503)

BC34277	Adult	21/07/1993	Benfontein, Free State		
	Control	25/10/2000	Benfontein, Free State	7y 3m	0 km

**Spectacled Weaver** *Ploceus ocularis* (0, 16)

BB51457	Adult	29/12/1989	Seldomseen, Zimbabwe		
	Control	09/11/2000	Seldomseen, Zimbabwe	10y 10m	0 km

**Redheaded Weaver** *Anaplectes rubriceps* (0, 1)

BC07566	Adult	26/10/1991	Mitsasa, Zimbabwe		
	Control	10/12/2000	Mitsasa, Zimbabwe	9y 2m	0 km

*Greatest elapsed time for this species in SAFRING's database; second control of this species.*

**Cape Weaver** *Ploceus capensis* (9, 160)

CC04355	Adult	17/07/1992	Goedeontmoeting, W Cape		
	Control	10/11/2000	Goedeontmoeting, W Cape	8y 4m	0 km

**Masked Weaver** *Ploceus velatus* (11, 147)

BC22665	Adult	01/09/1993	Goedeontmoeting, W Cape		
	Control	17/01/2001	Goedeontmoeting, W Cape	7y 5m	0 km

**Redbilled Quelea** *Quelea quelea* (10, 4)

AE48892	Adult	24/04/1999	Jakkalsfontein, Free State		
	Dead	17/11/2000	Luckhoff, Free State	1y 7m	424 km

**Red Bishop** *Euplectes orix* (9, 129)

BD16398	Adult	27/01/1993	Darvill, Natal		
	Control	10/02/2001	Darvill, Natal	8y 0m	0 km

**Black Widowfinch** *Vidua funereal* (0, 2)

GA07537	Adult	29/11/2000	Pietermaritzburg, Natal		
	Control	15/01/2001	Himeville, Natal	0y 2m	87 km

*Greatest distance moved for this species in SAFRING's database.*

**Errata for *Safring News* 29: 93–99.**

Longcrested Eagle 845604

Locality of ringing and resighting should be Riverside farm, Mataffin, Mpumulanga.

Pale Chanting Goshawk 841772

This record should be deleted. The recovery is actually 841771, which was found at the site of ringing. The greatest distance moved then remains 731 km for bird 64601288.



Sandwich Tern. There were two recoveries and four controls of this species during the 2000–2001 ringing year.

# Ringling summary for Uganda, March 1997 to December 2001

Malcolm Wilson

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## Introduction

This data is a summary of ringing effort aimed at Palaearctic migrants over four years from March 1997 until December 2001 on the Mweya Peninsula, Lake Edward, Queen Elizabeth National Park (QENP), Uganda. The ringing year 2001 represents numbers from ringing sites in Kampala, Entebbe and a wader site at Kibimba rice scheme, Iganga province, southeast Uganda.

## Ringling program at Mweya

In late March and early April 1996, a 2 week

feasibility study was undertaken to see what numbers of Palaearctic migrants could be caught on the Mweya Peninsula. It proved successful and I took up residence in Mweya full-time in March 1997.

Mistnetting was conducted on the Mweya Peninsula from dawn (06h00) until 10h00. A minimum of 80 to a maximum of 220 metres of mistnet was used, depending on available ringers. The habitat type was primarily a mixture of Sickie bush *Dichrostachys cinerea* and *Capparis tormentosa* thicket in an area well grazed by game: mainly hippo, elephant, waterbuck and

**Table 1.** Most frequently ringed birds ringed in Uganda, 1996–2001.

Species	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	Total
Barn Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	0	115	326	185	626	5	1257
Sand Martin <i>Riparia riparia</i>	14	27	6	181	1151	1	1380
Sedge Warbler <i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	30	24	6	8	67	0	135
Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	50	119	58	50	241	15	533
Willow Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	30	50	92	129	352	14	667
Garden Warbler <i>Sylvia borin</i>	1	26	22	17	113	25	204
Yellow Wagtail <i>Motacilla flava</i>	47	123	310	272	326	1	1079
Wood Sandpiper <i>Tringa glareola</i>	7	32	6	0	26	51	122
Marsh Sandpiper <i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	0	2	0	0	9	6	17
Common Sandpiper <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	5	26	8	3	14	11	67
Curlew Sandpiper <i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	0	1	1	0	2	10	14
Little Stint <i>Calidris minuta</i>	36	32	0	0	101	64	233
Ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	1	2	0	0	0	30	33
Caspian Plover <i>Charadrius asiaticus</i>	8	2	0	0	0	0	10
Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	0	2	0	0	4	33	39
Common Snipe <i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	2	0	0	0	12	9	23
Painted Snipe* <i>Rostratula benghalensis</i>	0	3	0	0	0	6	9
Collared (Redwinged) Pratincole* <i>Glareola pratincola</i>	0	17	1	0	90	0	108
Kittlitz's Plover* <i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>	75	0	11	0	98	0	184
<b>Total</b>							<b>6114</b>

\*Non-Palaearctic migrants

warthog. The ringing period was from mid-October until mid-May with the peak months being November and March.

The main species totals table shows the most common migrants caught at Mweya: 1996 represents the feasibility study (Table 1). The table does not show any strong constant effort bias as I was unable to ring regularly and numbers of birds ringed were often much higher during November–December when visiting ringers arrived in Uganda for the autumn period.

Other species of Palaearctic migrants caught were:

- 1 Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*,
- 1 Hobby Falcon *Falco subbuteo*,
- 2 White-winged Terns *Chlidonias leucop-terus*,
- 1 Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*,
- 2 Greenshanks *Tringa nebularia*,
- 1 Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*,
- 2 Turnstones *Arenaria interpres*,
- 5 Temminck's Stints *Calidris temminckii*,
- 1 Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus*,
- 1 Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arun-dinaceus*,
- 1 Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*,
- 2 Whitethroats *Sylvia communis*,
- 4 Barred Warblers *Sylvia nisoria*,
- 6 Olivaceous Warblers *Hippolais pallida*,
- 1 Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*,
- 8 Red-backed Shrikes *Lanius collurio*,
- 8 Spotted Flycatchers *Muscicapa striata*,
- 1 Semi-collared Flycatcher *Ficedula semi-torquata*,
- 1 Winchat *Saxicola rubetra*.

Nine Palaearctic species showed site fidelity, being retrapped in subsequent seasons (Table 2). Of four sites on the Peninsula up to 2 km apart, no Palaearctic species were retrapped at different sites. Adult Reed Warbler K28503, ringed on 27/05/1997 at QENP was retrapped at the same locality on 14/07/1997, i.e. it did not migrate to Europe. There was one foreign control: Lesser Black-backed Gull Larus C436, was ringed in Sahalahti, Hame, Finland, as a pullus on 23/06/1996

and retrapped on 24/01/1999 at QENP, a distance of 7980 km. Eleven Afrotropical longevity records are given (Table 3).

## Conclusion

A total of 10 014 birds of 275 species have been ringed to date from these sites in Uganda, 5822 of them Palaearctic migrants. Unfortunately only one foreign control has been made. In some years I received assistance from visiting UK ringers who helped boost ringed numbers of Palaearctic migrants. Most regular were Barry Williams, Chris Sharpe, Ian Kerton, Arron Sapsford, Andy Pierce, Clint Schipper (Australia), Francis Argyle, Steve Dodd, Billy Rutherford, Brian Manton, Paul Roper, Jason Bishop, Christer Hemborg (Sweden), Anders Oden (Sweden), and Staffan Ulfstrand (Sweden).

**Table 2.** Birds ringed and retrapped at the same locality, Uganda, 1996–2001.

Species	QENP	Kampala
Willow Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	3	4
Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>	13	1
Garden Warbler <i>Sylvia borin</i>	2	
Sedge Warbler <i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	1	
Barn Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	3	
Yellow Wagtail <i>Motacilla flava</i>	1	
Wood Sandpiper <i>Tringa glareola</i>	1	
Common Sandpiper <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	3	
Little Stint <i>Calidris minuta</i>	1	
Kittlit's Plover* <i>Charadrius pecuarius</i>	3	
Collared Pratincole* <i>Glareola pratincola</i>	2	

\*Non-Palaearctic migrants

**Table 3.** Selected longevity records of Afrotropical birds, Uganda, 1996–2001.

Species	Ring	Age & sex	Date ringed	Date retrapped	Elapsed time	Locality
Spectacled Weaver <i>Ploceus ocularis</i>	A82789	Adult male	05/04/1996	29/10/2000	4y 6m 24d	QENP
Slender-billed Weaver <i>Ploceus pelzelni</i>	K26606	Full grown	10/04/1996	16/12/2000	4y 8m 7d	QENP
Grey-backed Camaroptera <i>Camaroptera brachyura</i>	K26522	Full grown	10/04/1996	14/12/2000	4y 8m 5d	QENP
Angola Swallow <i>Hirundo angolensis</i>	K26034	Adult	31/03/1996	23/11/1999	3y 7m 23d	QENP
Lesser Striped Swallow <i>Hirundo abyssinica</i>	K26414	Adult	07/04/1996	10/12/2000	4y 8m 4d	QENP
Gabon (Mozambique) Nightjar <i>Caprimulgus fossii</i>	E2634	Adult male	07/03/1997	31/10/2000	3y 7m 25d	QENP
Pygmy Kingfisher <i>Ispidina picta</i>	E2642	Adult	09/03/1997	14/11/2000	3y 8m 7d	QENP
Coppery Sunbird <i>Nectarinia cuprea</i>	K28474	Adult male	06/05/1997	15/11/2000	3y 6m 11d	QENP
African Thrush <i>Turdus pelios</i>	A42323	Adult male	26/05/1997	15/11/2000	3y 5m 21d	QENP

Editor: Tables 2 and 3 have been shortened.

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# Reviews

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## WIWO Reports

*WIWO, Foundation Working Group for International Waterbird and Wetland Research, is a Dutch statutory body established to initiate, stimulate and organise scientific research on waterbirds and wetlands worldwide and to disseminate the gathered information for the protection of the habitats and bird populations involved. The reports reviewed here are available from WIWO, PO Box 925, NL-3700, AX, Zeist, The Netherlands or e-mail: reports@wiwo-international.org.*

**Spoonbill count on the Banc d'Arguin, Mauritania, January 2000. (WIWO report 70) O. Overdijk, C. de le Court & A. Gueye. 2001. 59 pp. including tables, maps and line drawings. Price: € 9.00.**

This report documents the fourth spoonbill count in the Parc National du Banc d'Arguin, Mauritania, for the Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucordia leucordia* and the Mauritanian Spoonbill *P. l. balsaci*. The authors also report on migration and turn-over rate, nest counts, site fidelity, food resources and feeding behaviour. Their main findings are that the Parc National du Banc d'Arguin is an

important breeding site for the Mauritanian Spoonbill and one of the most important wintering sites for the Eurasian Spoonbill on the East Atlantic Flyway. The report has both English and French translations and is recommended for anyone interested in spoonbill research, particularly in Europe and West Africa.

**Counts and ecology of waterbirds in the Sivash, Ukraine, August 1998. (WIWO report 71) J. van der Winden, E.A. Diadicheva, W.T. de Nobel & M.W.J. van Roomen (eds.) 2001. 118 pp. including tables, maps and graphs. Price: € 13.50.**

This report covers an expedition to this large Ramsar site in the northern part of the Black Sea to gather more detailed information on waterbird numbers and habitat use at the Sivash lagoon. Specific studies were also carried out including aspects relating to moult and feeding ecology of marsh terns and migration ecology of waders. Additional aims included training and education of local junior participants of the Azoz-Black Sea

Ornithological Station (AOS) and to provide support to AOS regarding analyses of research work carried out previously in the area. The report is written in English and is divided into ten chapters or papers, each devoted to a specific aspect of the research carried out during the expedition. It is well written and essential for anyone interested in wetlands, waterbird counts and wader ecology.

**Searching for Slenderbilled Curlews in Iran, January–February 2000. (WIWO report 72) T.M. van der Have, G.O. Keijl, J. Mansoori & V.V. Morozov. 2001. 69 pp. including tables, maps and black-and-white photographs. Price: € 9.00.**

The Slenderbilled Curlew is a globally threatened species and its status in Iran, and indeed worldwide, is poorly understood. However, during winter waterbird surveys in the 1980s and 1990s along the Persian Gulf coast these birds were regularly sighted. This, together with the fact that WIWO had identified the Persian Gulf coast as a research priority, prompted an expedition to this area to carry out a three week waterbird survey, paying particular attention to the presence and abundance of Slenderbilled Curlews, Eurasian

Curlews and Whimbrels. Although the area includes suitable habitat, no Slenderbilled Curlews were observed. However, more than 53 000 waterbirds of 82 species were counted including globally threatened species such as Dalmatian Pelican, Marbled Teal and White-tailed Eagle. The report contains five chapters and six appendices and highlights the importance of wetlands along the Iranian coast for waterbirds, particularly waders. It should be of interest to all wader and waterbird ecologists, particularly in eastern Europe.

**Waterbird count of Zanzibar and Pemba Islands, Tanzania, January 1998. (WIWO report 73) R. Geene (ed.) 2001. 88 pp. including tables, maps and graphs. Price: € 13.50.**

This report covers the results of an expedition in January 1998 to estimate the numbers of waterbirds wintering on Zanzibar and Pemba Islands, with special attention to Crab Plover *Dromas ardeola* status, abundance and distribution. Although the survey team did not manage to cover all areas on the islands, nearly 50 000 waterbirds were counted from specific counting areas. An estimated 8000–9000 Crab Plovers were counted: an important find, as this represents 20% of the global population. Curlew Sandpipers were the most abundant small wader (c. 10 000 birds) with Whimbrel (c. 5100 birds) and Terek Sandpiper (c. 3200 birds) numbers also being significant. The importance of the islands as a waterbird refuge is highlighted with counts from Zanzibar Island for three species,

namely Crab Plover, Terek Sandpiper and Grey Plover all meeting the Ramsar criteria. Kiweni Island, just south of Pemba Island, meets the Ramsar criteria for Crab Plover and Grey Plover. The report is divided into eight chapters and includes an annotated list of the waterbirds and other bird species observed and an appendix with the counts of all waterbirds per counting area plus overall totals. The report covers a region where few waterbird counts have been done before; it therefore provides an essential base from which further waterbird monitoring can now take place. All waterbird monitors in East and southern Africa, and wader ecologists, should be interested in obtaining a copy of this report.

*Reviews by Doug Harebottle,  
Avian Demography Unit, University of Cape Town*

# Ageing and sexing

## Notes on the ageing and sexing of Cape Siskins *Pseudochloroptila totta*

Vincent L. Ward

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The Cape Siskin is endemic to the fynbos biome and is in general a poorly studied species. Relatively few have been ringed (195 up to July 2001) and the current descriptions in Maclean (1993) are inadequate for accurate ageing and sexing. The revised descriptions presented below are based upon observations made of siskins netted in the Cederberg Wilderness Area between April 2000 and September 2001.

There is a wide overlap in mensural data for adult male and female Cape Siskins (Table 1). Cape Siskin adults are sexually dimorphic and can be sexed on plumage with a high degree of confidence (Table 2, over the page).

Juveniles superficially resemble females but lack any yellow markings. Detailed descriptions of the features that can be used to separate juveniles and female adults are included in Table 2.

**Table 1.** Measurements of adult Cape Siskins.

Measurements	Male			Female		
	Range	Mean	n	Range	Mean	n
Mass (g)	10.0–15.0	12.7	15	12.0–16.0	13.0	12
Head (mm)	24.2–26.3	25.5	13	24.5–26.5	25.4	7
Bill, base of feathers (mm)	9.4–11.4	10.2	14	9.0–11.6	9.8	11
Bill, union with skull (mm)	11.5–13.7	12.3	14	9.1–13.4	12.8	11
Bill depth (mm)	6.2–6.8	6.4	12	5.2–7.4	6.4	7
Tail (mm)	48–54	51.6	14	47–57	51.5	11
Wing (mm)	68.0–72.5	70.5	27	61.5–73.0	69.0	14
Tarsus (mm)	14.4–17.5	14.7	27	13.2–16.1	14.8	13

**Table 2.** Separation of adult male, adult female and juvenile Cape Siskins.

<b>Feature</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Juvenile</b>
<b>Head:</b>	Grey with grey and yellow streaks	Grey with darker grey streaks	Grey, moderately streaked with dark grey
<b>Eye stripe:</b>	Broad; rich yellow	Lemon-yellow with grey streaks	Buff or creamy yellow
<b>Breast:</b>	Golden-yellow	Grey with darker grey streaks	Greyish-brown
<b>Belly:</b>	Golden-yellow	Lemon-yellow	Light buff with yellow-green wash
<b>Flanks:</b>	Yellow with brown wash	Brown	Greyish-brown
<b>Lesser and median coverts:</b>	Brown with a yellow fringe	Brown with grey wash	Dark brown
<b>Rump:</b>	Yellow	Brownish olive	
<b>White remige tips:</b>	Well developed on primaries and secondaries	Spots on primaries poorly developed and may be absent on secondaries	Poorly developed or completely absent

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- Ringers are encouraged to send contributions to *Afring News*.
- Articles should be typed in double spacing using wide margins. Contributors are urged to submit their text in ASCII format on stiffer disk, or via email.
- Black-and-white illustrations of general impressions and/or specific species are always in demand; the artist will be acknowledged on the flagstaff page.
- Colour or black-and-white photographic prints of ringed birds or any ringing procedure or site are also very welcome.
- Submissions should reach SAFRING by June or November for inclusion in that issue.
- Suggestions for improvement to the format or content, together with all other material for the publication, should be addressed to:

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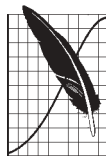
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