A Yellow-throated Leaflove (*Chlorochicla flavicollis*) with extra wing feathers among the primaries

*Ulf Ottosson[1, 2] and Jonas Waldenström[2]

[1]A.P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute, Jos University, Jos, Nigeria
[2]Ottenby Bird Observatory, PI 1500, SE 380 65 Degerhamn, Sweden

*Corresponding author. Present address: 18A, rue de Mamer, L-8280 Kehlen, Luxembourg; ottosson@village.uunet.lu

Despite the large number of moult studies published, little has been written on abnormal numbers of flight feathers (e.g. Stresemann 1963, Melville 1985, Copete *et al.* 1992, Ottosson & Waldenström 2002). The most commonly reported anomaly is extra tail feathers (anisorectricyly; e.g. Snow 1967, Melville 1985). Reports of birds with extra wing feathers also occur (Stresemann 1963, Melville 1985, Copete *et al.* 1992, Ottosson & Waldenström 2002).

At the newly established A.P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute, Amurum, (09°52'N 08°59'E) on the Jos plateau in central Nigeria, intensive ringing studies on breeding birds are carried out to gather information on the longevity of African birds. As part of this project, the moult patterns and duration of moult of some resident species are studied. Each bird is checked for growing or shed flight feathers according to the method of Ginn & Melville (1983) which includes a careful study of each flight feather. We found one Yellow-throated Leaflove *Chlorochicla flavicollis* which had an abnormal number of primaries (Fig. 1). In both wings, the primaries numbered eleven instead of the normal ten. The three innermost primaries were in active moult, with the two innermost being in stage 4 and the third in stage 1. The remaining eight primaries had not moulted. The bird was an adult in good con-

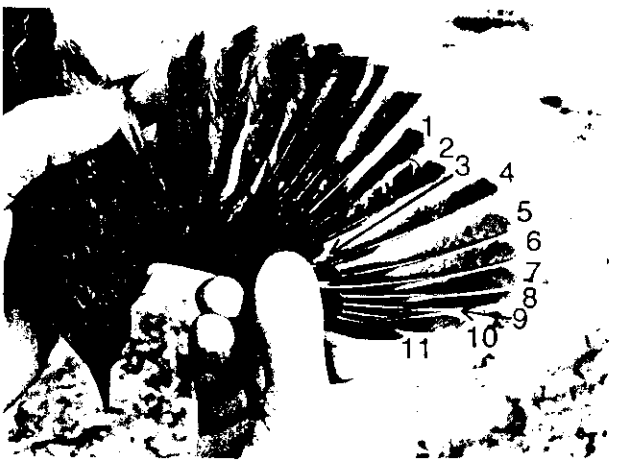

Fig. 1. The Yellow-throated Leaflove's extra wing feather.

dition, and was trapped in the species' preferred breeding habitat, implying that the extra feathers had no significant detrimental effect upon the bird.

Irregularities in the number of flight feathers could be due to an old feather not being shed before a new one is fully grown during moult. In our case, the bird was in active moult and all primaries were normally spaced, with no sign of feathers being squeezed together. It is likely that this kind of anomaly has been underreported so far, since the scoring of feathers and the examination of moult patterns are not standard routines in ringing activities.

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Notes from the Editor:

Afring News will appear on our web page in due course, as pdf files, where Fig. 1 of this article will be clearer (than in this printed version), as it will be in colour.

Web: http://www.uct.ac.za/depts/stats/adu/safring-index.htm

A related article lists abnormal numbers of tail feathers in different species:
Hanmer, D.B. 1981. Abnormal numbers of rectrices. Safring News 10: 3–5.