



Afring News online 38:23, 2009

Persistence of white primary in Dark-capped Bulbul

Dr Alan Brooks
ahbrooks@icon.co.za

On 9 April 2008 I ringed (BH64274) a Dark-capped Bulbul (*Pycnonotus tricolor*) in the Walter Sisulu Botanical Gardens (26°05'S 27°50'E), Gauteng, South Africa. At the time, I noted that primary 6 (P6) on the right wing was completely white, while that on the left wing was normal. The bird was in moult, but P6 was fully grown, the complete moult score being 555554410.

On 13 June 2009 I was lucky enough to retrap this bird, still with its one white primary. This time I had a camera with me and I was able to take a photo (Fig. 1). Evidently, the bird had completed its annual moult, but still retained the white feather. Peter Ryan (pers. comm.) suggested that there is probably a fault in the feather follicle of this bird and that the phenomenon is not common or well documented, hence this note for Afring News readers.



Fig. 1. Wing of Dark-capped Bulbul showing white primary