

Afring News

An electronic journal published by SAFRING, Animal Demography Unit at the University of Cape Town



Afring News online accepts papers containing ringing information about birds. This includes interesting ringing trips, interesting captures, faunistic observations relating to ringing, and analyses of ringing data. It will also consider for publication a variety of other interesting or relevant ornithological material: reports of projects and conferences, and any other interesting or relevant material.



Editor: H. Dieter Oschadleus

LARGEST-EVER RED-HEADED WEAVER *Anaplectes rubriceps* COLONY REVISITED

Dirk, Karen & Stefan van Stuyvenberg

Recommended citation format: van Stuyvenberg D, van Stuyvenberg K, van Stuyvenberg S. 2012. Largest-ever Red-headed Weaver *Anaplectes rubriceps* colony revisited. *Afring News* 41:4-7

URL: http://safring.adu.org.za/afring_news_current.php

Published online: 19 April 2012

-ISSN 2222-341X -



LARGEST-EVER RED-HEADED WEAVER *Anaplectes rubriceps* COLONY REVISITED

Dirk, Karen & Stefan van Stuyvenberg

PO Box 928, Montana Park, 0159
email: stuyvies@telkomsa.net

Introduction

It is not common that one finds large colonies of the Red-headed Weavers *Anaplectes rubriceps*. Red-headed Weavers mostly nest alone or sometimes in small groups and only a few large colonies were previously recorded.

During a previous visit in February 2010 a colony of Red-headed Weavers with a nest count of 210 nests was found at Mayholme Farm, Limpopo Province, South Africa (Oschadleus & van Stuyvenberg 2011). During the February 2010 visit a total of 73 Red-headed Weavers were ringed as well as 13 Cut-throat Finches *Amadina fasciata*, two Lesser Masked Weavers *Ploceus intermedius*, one recently fledged Diederik Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx caprius* and a few other species that frequented the garden around the house. Only two Red-headed Weavers were recaptured, FH37127 and FH37130, both males that had been ringed in July 2007 and a total of 12 previous incidental captures were recorded between 2006 and 2007.

Mayholme Farm Colony revisited on 17 January 2012

The colony is situated around the main farmhouse at Mayholme Farm on the Limpopo River (Fig. 1-5). Our aim was to ring and recapture as many Red-headed Weavers as possible after our first visit almost two years ago. Some of the Red-headed Weavers were still breeding and we were able to see a few very small chicks in the lower hanging nests. We erected 57 meters of mist nets around the house between 05h00 and 12h00. Birds caught were: 59 Red-headed Weavers, 33 Lesser Masked Weavers, 3 Cut-throat Finches,

3 Diederik Cuckoo and 21 birds of other species that frequented the garden. The Red-headed Weavers comprised 30 adult males and 28 adult females and 1 immature. A total of 13 Red-headed Weavers were recaptured. One individual male, FH37127, was recaptured the first time during our 2010 visit and again during the re-visit. This individual was originally ringed on 18 July 2007.

Colony size and breeding

Ringling continued until 12h00 after which we started counting the nests. A total of 118 Red-headed Weaver nests and 47 Lesser Masked Weaver nests were counted in front of the house in a row of four wild *Burkea africana* trees (Fig. 5).

A total of 60 Red-headed Weaver nests and 70 Lesser Masked Weaver nests were counted in a Baobab tree at the back of the house. Only a few nests (10) were visible on building structures. Several nests contained small chicks but none could be ringed due to them being too small. Several Diederik Cuckoos were active around the nests, of which three were caught and ringed.

Of note is that several Lesser Masked Weaver nests were built using the active or non-active nests of the Red-headed Weavers as basis to attach their nests (Fig. 1-2). It was also noted that over a period of two years (since our previous visit) a significant number of Lesser Masked Weavers had moved into this particular Red-headed Weaver colony. A total of 117 Lesser Masked Weaver nests was counted around the house.

Acknowledgements

John Williams of Mayholme Farm is thanked for permitting the ringling on his farm.

References

Oschadleus HD & van Stuyvenberg D. 2011. Largest-ever Red-headed Weaver *Anaplectes rubriceps* colony. Bulletin of the African Bird Club 18:203-206



Fig 1. Lesser Masked Weaver nests (lower nest) were built using the active and non-active nests of the Red-headed Weavers (upper nest) as basis to attach their nests.



Fig 2. Active Red-headed Weaver nest (upper nest) next to a Lesser Masked Weaver nest (lower nest).



Fig 3. Counting Lesser Masked Weaver nests.



Fig 4. Counting Red-headed Weaver nests.



Fig 5. Red-headed Weaver colony in front of farmhouse.

Links related to this article

News item about largest colony for this species:

<http://weavers.adu.org.za/newstable.php?id=143>

PHOWN records may be viewed here:

Red-headed Weaver record, 2012:

http://weavers.adu.org.za/phown_vm.php?vm=1997

Lesser Masked Weaver record, 2012:

http://weavers.adu.org.za/phown_vm.php?vm=1998

Red-headed Weaver record, 2010:

http://weavers.adu.org.za/phown_vm.php?vm=9