

REFERENCES (contd.)

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LONGEVITY FROM RETRAPS CONTINUED

D.B. Hanmer

In Hanmer (1981) I listed 117 birds caught at Nchalo, Malaŵi (16 16S; 34 55E) which were known to be over four years old. Almost two years later, in July 1983, there were 115 birds of 45 species which were known to be six or more years old, plus a further 69 (including another 16 species - Table 1 opposite) which were five years old or more. In Table 2 (page 59), ages are given to the nearest half year, taking into account the month of ringing and recapture and the apparent age at ringing. Of the 115 birds, 86 were seven or more, 44 eight or more, 21 nine or more and 9 ten or more years old. All the oldest birds were weavers or bishops, but among the nine-year-olds were three bulbuls, a warbler and a flycatcher. There was a greater variety of species in the eight-year-old group; a dove, a nightjar, four bulbuls, three warblers, a shrike, two sunbirds, a sparrow and a canary, as well as nine weavers or bishops. The five-, six- and seven-year-old groups were equally varied.

Winterbottom (1982) suggested that birds of thick bush are more likely to reach four years of age than those which live in open areas, but Table 2 suggests otherwise. Admittedly more weavers and bishops than bush birds have been ringed at Nchalo, but even so, few individuals of bush species were recaptured during 1981/1982 or 1982/1983, more than four years after ringing, despite fairly intensive netting in bush or thicket. This may be due to trap-shyness. Weavers and bishops, particularly in the off-season, move about in big flocks and may not individually be looking where they are going, whereas a thicket bird probably knows where the nets are and avoids them where possible.

The capture of several Yellow Weavers year after year is interesting, as this species does not nest anywhere near the trapping area and these birds have only been caught in the off-season.

TABLE 1

SPECIES WITH BIRDS ONLY KNOWN TO BE FIVE OR MORE YEARS OLD

SPECIES	NUMBER AND SEX
Black Crake <i>Amaurornis flavirostris</i>	1 m
Mourning Dove <i>Streptopelia decipiens</i>	1
Tambourine Dove <i>Turtur tympanistria</i>	1 m
Speckled Mousebird <i>Colius striatus</i>	3
Pied Kingfisher <i>Ceryle rudis</i>	1 f
Greater Honeyguide <i>Indicator indicator</i>	1 f
Black Cuckooshrike <i>Campephaga flava</i>	1 f
Natal Robin <i>Cossypha natalensis</i>	1
Cape Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus gracilirostris</i>	2
African marsh Warbler <i>A. baeticatus</i>	2
Shortwing Cisticola <i>Cisticola brachyptera</i>	1
Puffback Shrike <i>Dryoscopus cubla</i>	2 m, 1 f
Collared Sunbird <i>Anthreptes collaris</i>	1 m, 1 f
Greyheaded Sparrow <i>Passer griseus</i>	1
Redshouldered Widow <i>Euplectes axillaris</i>	1 f
Common Waxbill <i>Estrilda astrild</i>	1 m, 2 f

Some individuals of other weaver and bishop species have also only been caught in winter, suggesting that these species return annually to dry-season feeding areas as well as to breeding places.

Among those listed are species which are, or may be, ~~present~~ at Nchalo and these too show ~~evidence~~ *evidence* for either breeding or wintering areas; Diederik Cuckoo, Moçambique Nightjar, Little Bee-eater, Natal Robin, Garden Warbler, Great and Basra Reed Warblers and African and European Marsh Warblers, Paradise Flycatcher, Coppery Sunbird, possibly other sunbirds, and possibly Blackeyed and Sombre Bulbuls, which form flocks in winter and may move some distance from their breeding territories.

Birds whose age is not marked '>' (Table 2) were ringed when visibly immature and could be fairly accurately aged. Immatures of territorial species usually move away from where they hatched and although some ringed at Nchalo may have been caught while dispersing from elsewhere, it is interesting to see how many have been recaptured several years later; 2 Emeraldspotted Doves, 4 Little Bee-eaters, 3 Blackeyed Bulbuls, 2 Terrestrial and 1 Sombre Bulbul, 2 Heuglin's Robins, 2 Crombeks, 2 Bleating Bush Warblers, 1 Redfaced Cisticola, 1 Paradise Flycatcher, 1 Puffback Shrike, 2 Whitebellied and 3 Scarletched Sunbirds and 1 Yelloweyed Canary. Weavers and bishops usually return to their natal colonies to breed from two years old, so it is not surprising that 17 weavers and 10 bishops, ringed as immatures, were recaptured five or more years later.

Of the 134 sexed birds, 82 (61%) were male. This is similar to the figure found in 1981 and although it may not be significant, does suggest some sex difference in survival rates.

The oldest Moçambique Nightjars, Terrestrial Bulbuls, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Whitebellied and Scarletched Sunbirds, House Sparrows, Lesser Masked and Spottedbacked Weavers and Red and Yellowrumped Bishops were male, but the oldest Paradise Flycatchers were female, as found in 1981.

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TABLE 2

OLDEST THREE NCHALO RECAPTURES OF EACH SPECIES,
OVER SIX YEARS OLD, PLUS NUMBER OF OTHER BIRDS
FIVE OR MORE YEARS OLD

SPECIES	SEX	KNOWN AGE YEARS
Bluespotted Dove <i>Turtur afer</i>		> 6,5
		> 6,0
Emeraldspotted Dove <i>T. chalcospilos</i>		> 8,5
Plus 1		6,0
Diederik Cuckoo <i>Chrysococcyx caprius</i>	m	> 6,0
Plus 2f		
Moçambique Nightjar <i>Caprimulgus fossii</i>	m	> 8,0
	m	> 7,0
	m	> 6,0
Malachite Kingfisher <i>Alcedo cristata</i>		> 7,0
Little Bee-eater <i>Merops pusillus</i>		> 7,0
Plus 4		7,0
		7,0
Blackeyed Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>	m	> 8,0
Plus 6m, 2 f	f	> 8,0
	m	> 7,5
		contd.

SPECIES	SEX	KNOWN AGE YEARS
Terrestrial Bulbul <i>Phyllastrephus terrestris</i>	m	> 9,0
Plus 1 m	m	> 6,5
	m	> 6,5
Sombre Bulbul <i>Andropadus importunus</i>	f	> 9,0
Plus 4m, 1 f	f	> 9,0
	m	> 8,0
Heuglin's Robin <i>Cossypha heuglini</i>		7,0
Plus 1		
Garden Warbler <i>Sylvia borin</i>		> 6,5
Plus 2		> 6,5
Great Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>		> 8,5
Plus 3		
Basra Reed Warbler <i>A. griseldis</i>		> 7,5
Plus 2		
European Marsh Warbler <i>A. palustris</i>		6,5
Southern Crombek <i>Sylvietta rufescens</i>		> 7,5
Plus 1		7,5
Yellowbreasted Apalis <i>Apalis flavida</i>	m	> 8,0
Plus 1m, 1f	m	> 6,5
Bleating Bush Warbler <i>Camaroptera brachyura</i>		9,5
		> 7,0
		7,0

SPECIES	SEX	KNOWN AGE YEARS
Redfaced Cisticola <i>Cisticola erythrops</i>	m	> 8,0
Plus 1f	m	> 7,5
Tawnyflanked Prinia <i>Prinia subflava</i>		> 7,5
		> 6,0
Wattle-eyed Flycatcher <i>Platysteira peltata</i>	m	> 7,0
Plus 1f		
Paradise Flycatcher <i>Terpsiphone viridis</i>	f	> 9,0
Plus 1f	f	> 6,5
Threestreaked Tchagra <i>Tchagra australis</i>		> 6,5
Orangebreasted Bush Shrike <i>Telophorus sulfureopectus</i>		> 6,0
Plus 1		
Brubru Shrike <i>Nilaus afer</i>		8,0
Coppery Sunbird <i>Nectarinia cuprea</i>	m	7,5
Yellow-bellied Sunbird <i>N. venusta</i>	f	> 8,0
Whitebellied Sunbird <i>N. talatala</i>	m	7,0
Plus 1m		
Scarletched Sunbird <i>N. senegalensis</i>	m	> 8,0
	m	6,0
	m	6,0
House Sparrow <i>Passes domesticus</i>	m	> 8,0
Plus 2m		

SPECIES	SEX	KNOWN AGE YEARS
Spectacled Weaver <i>Ploceus ocularis</i>	f	> 7,5
Lesser Masked Weaver <i>P. intermedius</i>	m	8,0
Plus 1f	m	> 7,5
	m	7,0
Spottedbacked Weaver <i>P. cucullatus</i>	m	>10,0
Plus 1m	m	8,5
	m	7,0
Yellow Weaver <i>P. subaureus</i>	m	> 7,5
Plus 3f	m	7,5
Brownthroated Weaver <i>P. xanthopterus</i>	m	>10,5
plus 6m, 10f	f	>10,0
	m	>10,0
Masked Weaver <i>P. velatus</i>	f	> 7,0
Plus 1m, 1f		
Red Bishop <i>Euplectes orix</i>	m	>10,0
Plus 5m, 2f	m	>10,0
	m	9,0
Firecrowned Bishop <i>E. hordeaceus</i>	m	7,0
	m	7,0
Yellowrumped Bishop <i>E. capensis</i>	m	> 9,0
Plus 1f	m	> 7,5
	m	7,5

SPECIES	SEX	KNOWN AGE YEARS
Melba Finch <i>Pytilia melba</i>	m	> 6,5
Plus lf	f	> 6,5
Jameson's Firefinch <i>Lagonosticta rhodopareia</i>	m	> 6,5
Plus lm, lf		
Blue Waxbill <i>Uraeginthus angolensis</i>	m	> 6,5
Plus lm, lf		
Steelblue Widowfinch <i>Vidua chalybeata</i>	m	> 7,0
Plus lf		
Paradise Whydah <i>V. paradisaea</i>	f	> 6,0
Yelloweyed Canary <i>Serinus mozambicus</i>	m	> 7,0
Plus lm, lf		
Bully Canary <i>S. sulphuratus</i>	f	> 8,0
Plus lm		

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