

# LETTERS & NOTICES

Dear Mr. Oatley,

I have just received the latest Safring News which contains nice articles on sexing and ageing. I have also noticed at other times short articles of a similar nature both in Safring News and elsewhere. These prompt me to suggest that 'somebody' should assemble a manual on the ageing and sexing of all South African birds which would be indispensable to all ringers.

The general style could be that of 'Svensson' used in Europe. A practical format would be a loose-leaf, ring-bound file of A5 size, each species being allocated a page. Then new entries could be added without difficulty and updating any sheet would also be simple. To start with the manual would be a trifle slim but the gaps and errors should prompt ringers to write up some of their observations.

SAFRING's rôle would be to co-ordinate the effort and produce the manual, continually updating it in the form of supplements. Ringers would be only too pleased to purchase it and the manual might even finance itself.

D. Johnson, Natal Parks, Game and Fish Preservation Board, P.O. Box 662, PIETERMARITZBURG, 3200

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Dear Mr. Oatley,

Moulting birds do not usually co-operate with their investigators as well as did a male Thickbilled Weaver *Amblyospiza albifrons* which was trapped and ringed (Ring No. 4-66505) in my garden on 17.11.1982 at which time it was in first-year plumage, which closely resembles the plumage of the adult female. Moulting had not then commenced.