

Trapped again on 30.01.1983, primary moult had started. P1 & P2 on both sides being half-grown with the black and white pattern of the adult male.

Retrapped once more on 13.06.1983, secondary moult was almost complete, S5 on both sides being a few millimetres short and rectrix moult being complete. S6 was fully grown on both wings.

These findings correspond with a duration of 5 months for total moult. In my paper (Ostrich, June 1982) on moult in this species, I state that the normal duration of moult is about 4 months. One wonders if the longer duration in this individual might be related to the severe drought currently afflicting Natal.

H.T. Laycock, 39 Armstrong Drive, PIETERMARITZBURG, 3201

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Dear Mr. Oatley,

We were very interested to read the letter from M. Fagan on ring sizes for the Cape Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus gracillirostris* in Safring News 11(2) 1982. In banding Clamorous Reed Warblers *Acrocephalus stentoreus*, we encountered a similar problem in a few birds. Submission was made to the Secretary of the Australian Bird Banding Scheme, and the official size was changed from 2,3 mm to 3,0 mm.

On examination of the tight bands some were found to have strips of moulted podotheca* preventing free movement. These were removed without much difficulty, except in one case where inflammation of the tarsus necessitated the removal of the band.

All birds are colour-banded - right leg one colour above metal, left leg two colours. In no case has there been any problem with the left leg, and presumably it is not the combination of colour and metal on the right leg as in one case the bird was

* cornified integument of the toes and tarsi

not colour-banded (nestlings are not colour-banded). The difference in the internal measurements of metal and celluloid is insignificant, i.e. 2,3 mm and 2,4 mm respectively. Could the difference in depth, 6 mm and 4 mm, be a contributory factor?

The Reed Warbler only breeds here and it moults in its non-breeding habitat, which is unknown. Have ringers in southern African handled moulting Reed Warblers and if so is the species prone to a greater moult of the podotheca?

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MYSTERY RING

Early this year a ring was received from Natal bearing the following inscription:

(Z) $\frac{\infty}{2}$ 984 D50

It bears no address and no other clues to its origin. It was initially reported to be from a swallow but further inquiry brought the reply that it was from an African Black Swift *Apus barbatus*. The ring was a metal one but brittle, and broke into two pieces when attempts were made to open it out.

If any person can supply further information which will enable us to trace the origin of this ring, would they please contact SAFRING.

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