

ARTICLES & REPORTS

MALAŴI LONGEVITY AGAIN

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In Hanmer (1981) I listed 117 birds caught at Nchalo, Malaŵi, which were known to be over four years old. In Hanmer (1983) I listed 115 individuals of 45 species which were known to be six or more years old and a further 69 of 61 species which were only known to be five or more years old. Something odd happened to the mathematics concerning the numbers of birds which were known to be seven or eight etc. years old, with the result that of the 115 birds known to be six or more, 160 were between seven and ten years old, which is manifestly impossible. In this paper I have recalculated (I no longer have the original calculations) the number of birds of various ages as at July 1983. The totals obtained may not be exactly the same as they were in 1983, because I cannot now remember whether in a borderline case I decided a bird to be, for example, five and a half or six years old, but the results must be very similar. They are compared with the numbers of birds of various ages found at July 1985 in Table 1 overleaf.

Birds were aged to the nearest half year, taking into account the breeding season, months of first and last capture and the apparent age of the bird when ringed. Birds ringed when apparently adult could not be accurately aged and are given as '>' the minimum possible age.

At July 1985, 256 birds of 67 species were known to have reached five or more years of age. 65 birds of 28 species were eight or more years old (Table 3 on page 56) and 191, including another 39 species, were five to seven or more years old (Table 2 on page 53). As found previously, most of the oldest birds were weavers or bishops, but there was a bulbul of more than 12 and four other bulbuls of 10 or more years old. Other individuals of 10 or more were a dove, a flycatcher and a sunbird. Among the nine-year olds were two doves, a swallow, two bulbuls, a robin and three warblers, as well as several weavers and bishops.

TABLE 1

NUMBERS OF BIRDS IN EACH AGE CLASS CAUGHT
UP TO JULY 1983 AND UP TO JULY 1985

Known age (years)	July 1983	July 1985
5 - > 5,5	69	89
6 - > 6,5	31	54
7 - > 7,5	42	46
8 - > 8,5	23	27
9 - > 9,5	10	18
10 - > 10,5	9	13
11 - > 11,5	0	4
12 - > 12,5	0	3
Total number of birds	184	254
Total number of species	61	68

Most of the species in which old birds have been found were medium to large ploceids or insectivorous species. Despite fairly large numbers having been ringed, very few small seed-eaters of five or more years old have been caught; the eight year old Melba Finch *Pytilia melba* is an exception.

The sex of 188 birds was known and of these 107 (57%) were male. This figure is a little lower than that found previously (61%). This may be due to the larger numbers of elderly female weavers and Viduine finches caught during 1983/1984 and 1984/1985. Among the oldest birds (8 - >12,5 years) 59% were male, but among those 5 - >7,5 years old, only 56% were male.

There has been a satisfactory increase in the numbers of old birds caught in the last two ringing seasons. The ringing station has only been in existence for 11,5 years, so it was nice to have recaptured seven birds which were ringed during the first six months of work in 1974. However, trapping figures have dropped steadily over the last few years, since the bird-brained are not particularly stupid and have become trap-shy. Thus it is possible that there are at least a few more birds of over 11 years old still in existence in the trapping area.

TABLE 2

SPECIES RECORDED ONLY IN LOWER AGE CATEGORIES

Species	Number and sex at age (years)		
	5 - >5,5	6 - >6,5	7 - >7,5
Black Crane <i>Amaurornis flavirostris</i>	1 M		
Tambourine Dove <i>Turtur tympanistria</i>	1 M		
Diederik Cuckoo <i>Chrysococcyx caprius</i>	2 F	1 M	
Speckled Mousebird <i>Colius striatus</i>	3		
Pied Kingfisher <i>Ceryle rudis</i>	1 F		

(contd.)

SPECIES RECORDED ONLY IN LOWER AGE CATEGORIES

Species	Number and sex at age (years)		
	5 - >5,5	6 - >6,5	7 - >7,5
Malachite Kingfisher <i>Alcedo cristata</i>	1		
Pygmy Kingfisher <i>Ispidina picta</i>	1		
Little Bee-eater <i>Merops pusillus</i>	3	1	3
Greater Honeyguide <i>Indicator indicator</i>	1 F		
Eastern Sawwing Swallow <i>Psalidoprocne orientalis</i>	1 F		
Black Cuckooshrike <i>Campephaga flava</i>	1 F		
Yellowbellied Bulbul <i>Chlorocichla flaviventris</i>		1 M	
Natal Robin <i>Cossypha natalensis</i>	1		
Garden Warbler <i>Sylvia borin</i>	1	2	
Cape Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus gracilirostris</i>	2		
African Marsh Warbler <i>Acrocephalus baeticatus</i>	3		
European Marsh Warbler <i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>		1	
Southern Crombec <i>Sylvietta rufescens</i>	2	1	1
Shortwing Cisticola <i>Cisticola brachyptera</i>	1		
Tawnyflanked Prinia <i>Prinia subflava</i>		1	1
Wattle-eyed Flycatcher <i>Platysteira peltata</i>	1 F		1 M

SPECIES RECORDED ONLY IN LOWER AGE CATEGORIES

Species	Number and sex at age (years)		
	5 - >5,5	6 - >6,5	7 - >7,5
Puffback Shrike <i>Dryoscopus cubla</i>	2 M, 1 F		
Threestreaked Tchagra <i>Tchagra australis</i>		1	
Orangebreasted Bush Shrike <i>Telophorus sulfureopectus</i>		2	1
Coppery Sunbird <i>Nectarinia cuprea</i>	1 M		1 M
Collared Sunbird <i>Anthreptes collaris</i>		1 M	1 F
Greyheaded Sparrow <i>Passer griseus</i>	1		
Spectacled Weaver <i>Ploceus ocularis</i>		1 M, 1 F	1 F
Yellow Weaver <i>Ploceus subaureus</i>	4 F	1 M	2 M
Firecrowned Bishop <i>Euplectes hordeaceus</i>		2 M	
Redshouldered Widow <i>Euplectes axillaris</i>		1 F	
Jameson's Firefinch <i>Lagonosticta rhodopareia</i>	1 M, 1 F	1 M	
Blue Waxbill <i>Uraeginthus angolensis</i>	1 M, 2 F	1 M	
Common Waxbill <i>Estrilda astrild</i>	1 M, 3 F	1 M	
Pintailed Whydah <i>Vidua macroura</i>	1 F	1 M	
Purple Widowfinch <i>Vidua purpurascens</i>	1 F		
Steelblue Widowfinch <i>Vidua chalybeata</i>		1 F	

(contd.)

SPECIES RECORDED ONLY IN LOWER AGE CATEGORIES

Species	Number and sex at age (years)		
	5 - >5,5	6 - >6,5	7 - >7,5
Paradise Whydah <i>Vidua paradisaea</i>		1 F	
Yelloweyed Canary <i>Serinus mozambicus</i>	1 M, 1 F		1 M
Number of birds in each age class	50	23	14

TABLE 3

SPECIES, SEX AND RING NUMBER OF BIRDS
EIGHT OR MORE YEARS OLD

(Number of birds between 5 - >7,5 years given as 'Plus')

Species	Sex	Ring No.	Age (Years)
Mourning Dove <i>Streptopelia decipiens</i> plus 2	?	5-53176	> 10
Bluespotted Dove <i>Turtur afer</i> plus 2	?	4-35757	> 9
Emeraldspotted Dove <i>Turtur chalcospilos</i> plus 3	?	4-35661	> 9
	?	4-35512	> 8,5

BIRDS EIGHT OR MORE YEARS OLD

Species	Sex	Ring No.	Age (Years)
Mocambique Nightjar <i>Caprimulgus fossii</i>	M	4-35755	> 8
plus 2 M	M	4-35615	> 8
Wiretailed Swallow <i>Hirundo smithii</i>	F	AA-30144	9,5
plus 1 M, 1 F	F	AA-52393	> 8
Blackeyed Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>	M	2-96837	> 10
plus 7 M, 2 F	?	2-97074	> 10
	F	BB-00334	> 9,5
	M	2-96724	> 8
Terrestrial Bulbul <i>Phyllastrephus terrestris</i>	M	2-96748	> 12
plus 4 M, 4 F	F	BB-00275	> 9
Sombre Bulbul <i>Andropadus importunus</i>	F	2-96914	> 10,5
plus 8 M, 1 ?, 2 F	F	2-96803	10
	M	BB-00274	> 8
Heuglin's Robin <i>Cossypha heuglini</i>	?	BB-00384	9,5
plus 1			
Great Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	?	BB-00025	> 8,5
plus 5			
Basra Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus griseldis</i>	?	BB-00356	> 9,5
	?	BB-00519	> 8,5
Yellowbreasted Apalis <i>Apalis flavida</i>	M	AA-52532	> 9,5

(contd.)

BIRDS EIGHT OR MORE YEARS OLD

Species	Sex	Ring No.	Age (Years)
Yellowbreasted Apalis (contd.)			
plus 1 M, 1 F	M	AA-55801	> 8
	M	591-17989	> 8
Bleating Bush Warbler <i>Camaroptera brachyura</i>	?	591-17206	9, 5
plus 3			
Redfaced Cisticola <i>Cisticola erythropis</i>	M	AA-30883	> 8
plus 2 M, 1 F			
Paradise Flycatcher <i>Terpsiphone viridis</i>	F	AA-30017	> 10, 5
plus 1 M, 2 F			
Brubru Shrike <i>Nilaus afer</i>	?	2-96695	8
Yellowbellied Sunbird <i>Nectarinia venusta</i>	F	AA-30421	> 8
plus 1 F			
Whitebellied Sunbird <i>Nectarinia talatala</i>	M	AA-34614	> 10
plus 1 M, 2 F			
Scarletchedsted Sunbird <i>Nectarinia senegalensis</i>	M	AA-52818	> 10, 5
plus 2M, 2 F	M	AA-34617	> 8
House Sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i>	M	2-96793	> 8
plus 3 M			
Lesser Masked Weaver <i>Ploceus intermedius</i>	F	AA-40221	9
plus 2 M	M	AA-30505	8

BIRDS EIGHT OR MORE YEARS OLD

Species	Sex	Ring No.	Age (Years)
Spottedbacked Weaver <i>Floceus cucullatus</i>	M	BB-11373	> 10
plus 2 M	M	2-93217	8,5
Brownthroated Weaver <i>Floceus manthopterus</i>	F	2-93245	> 12,5
	F	AA-30470	> 12
plus 4 M, 10 F	F	AA-38983	> 11
	F	2-93015	11
	M	2-93122	> 10,5
	M	2-93307	> 10
	M	2-93446	> 10
	M	2-93206	> 9,5
	M	2-93321	> 9,5
	F	2-93292	> 9,5
	F	AA-38919	> 9,5
	F	BB-11915	> 9
	F	AA-39010	9
	F	AA-39274	8,5
	F	2-93040	8,5
	M	BB-12083	8
Masked Weaver <i>Floceus velatus</i>	M	AA-39279	11,5
plus 2 F			
Red Bishop <i>Euplectes orix</i>	M	AA-40416	> 11
plus 4 M, 2 F	M	AA-39261	10

(contd.)

BIRDS EIGHT OR MORE YEARS OLD

Species	Sex	Ring No.	Age (Years)
Red Bishop (contd.)	M	AA-30496	9
	M	591-17453	8,5
	M	AA-39145	8,5
	F	AA-40988	8
	F	AA-41141	8
Yellowrumped Widow <i>Euplectes capensis</i> Plus 3 M, 1 F	M	BB-11673	> 9
Melba Finch <i>Pytilia melba</i> plus 4 M, 2 F	M	AA-52900	> 8
Bully Canary <i>Serinus sulphuratus</i> plus 1 F	M	AA-43701	> 8,5
	F	AA-39074	> 8
Number of birds eight years old or more		65	
Number of birds 5 - >7,5 years old		104	

REFERENCES:

Hanmer, D.B. 1981. Longevity from retraps. Safring News 10: 12-22.

Hanmer, D.B. 1983. Longevity from retraps continued. Safring News 12: 56-63.

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