

cannot be safely estimated if only data on birds recovered is available. It is absolutely essential that information on the dates, places and ages of all birds ringed also be computerized, and the latest and best computer software assumes this.

Or to put it the other way around, and bluntly, the message of EURING 1992 is that ringing schemes which are not investigating ways of getting their primary data, the ringing information, into the computer are still ringing in the dark ages!

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**BLUE WAXBILL RING CEMENTED TO FOOT**

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Whilst mistnetting in my garden in Lilongwe, Malawi, on 25.01.92, I retrapped a Blue Waxbill *Uraeginthus angolensis* X69675 which I had ringed five weeks previously. I was horrified to find that the bird's left ankle was severely swollen, with the ring jammed on it. On the face of it, the cause of the injury appeared to be directly from the ring. The ring had been perfectly fitted, but on closer inspection I noticed that the gap between the ring and leg was filled with a very fine, hardened, whitish cement.

I prised the ring open with a knife, scraped out the cement, cleaned the remains of the cement off the bird's ankle

with a wetted finger and refitted the ring to the other leg. The ankle was very swollen but otherwise not deformed and the bird still appeared to have full use of all toes. As luck would have it, I retrapped X69675 again on 22.02.92 and was pleased to find that the swelling was almost completely reduced and doubtless the bird was well on to the road to recovery.

The mystery is how the ring had become wedged in such a way - and what was the nature of the cement? The only explanation I can think of is that it was hardened birdlime. Perhaps the birdlimer had caught the bird and released it in view of the presence of the ring which may have been regarded as a token of ownership. Fortunately the bird was not found by a 'birdlover', or otherwise I can imagine what would have been the natural reaction to the practise of ringling.

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