

BIRD SURVIVAL DATA FROM THE OLIEWENHUIS GARDENS, CENTRAL BLOEMFONTEIN

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The article of Hanmer (1994) on bird longevity prompted me to report on similar results obtained at the Oliewenhuis Gardens in Bloemfontein since August 1988 (De Swardt 1992a). During the first few years some valuable recapture data were recorded from several species and some of these, as well as a description of the study site, appeared in a previous *Safring News* (De Swardt 1992b).

The aim of this note is to report on some survival data obtained during the past seven years until November 1994. Since August 1988, a total of 729 birds of 38 species have been ringed at the gardens (Table 1). This total represents a 50% increase since the 1992 report. The most frequently captured birds were Cape White-eyes, Redeyed Bulbuls, Titbabbler and Olive Thrushes, and most recaptures were also of these species. During the study a total of 52 recaptures (13 species) was obtained with a recapture rate of 7.13% (Table 1).

Table 2 gives details of survival data obtained since 1988. Three birds were more than four years old on day of recapture. Table 3 gives a selection of 18 significant recaptures of individual birds which survived between two to three years or more. The Cape White-eye has the highest recapture rate (Table 1) and a mean elapsed time of 3.1 years was obtained for five selected individuals. Other interesting survival figures were also obtained from the following species: a Titbabbler AB68753 was recaptured after 48 months (four years), a Cape Sparrow BC03456 after 51 months (4.2 years) and a Masked Weaver BC03461 nearly made five years at 58 months (*i.e.* 4.8 years). An overall mean monthly elapse between ringing and recapture of 36.2 months (3.0 years) was recorded during the study.

Although these survival figures are not as significant as those in other reports (e.g. Hanmer 1989), the potential to obtain recapture data each year is greater. The data in Table 2 shows an increase in recaptures during the first two years after ringing, mainly of birds ringed between 1988 and 1990. The lower recapture rate during the last few years could be as a result of ringing effort (five sessions in 1994 with a maximum caught of 22 birds), or dispersal late during the season as a result of the recent droughts. During 1994, ringing sessions were also held at Bishops Glen, outside Bloemfontein, to trap warblers and no ringing was carried out during four to five months of that year.

Looking again at the data presented in Table 1 and 3, one can note that the species with the highest numbers ringed also yield the most recaptures. These birds are abundant at Oliewenhuis and elsewhere and survival data were obtained from most of these species. Cape White-eyes, for example, congregate in flocks during the winter months when high numbers are caught (a total of 25 new birds plus five recaptures were caught during August 1993; 26 were caught during September 1993;) and recaptures are then easily obtained. Olive Thrushes and Redeyed Bulbuls also yielded high recaptures, but it seemed as if much dispersal in these species occurred, as only two recaptures more than 24 months after ringing were recorded for each species. The Cape Sparrows and Masked Weavers have the longest survival records so far (Table 3) and although no large numbers have been caught, these birds also occur in flocks during the winter months. The ringing programme at Oliewenhuis will continue for the next two to three years especially to obtain recapture and survival data.

Table 1. Birds captured at Oliewenhuis with highest totals, number of recaptures and recapture rates

Species		Numbers caught	Numbers recaptured	Recapture rates %
Cape White-eye	<i>Zosterops pallidus</i>	235	15	6,3
Redeyed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus nigricans</i>	131	9	6,8
Olive Thrush	<i>Turdus olivaceus</i>	87	6	8,0
Cape Robin	<i>Cossypha caffra</i>	32	4	12,5
Cape Sparrow	<i>Passer melanurus</i>	32	1	3,1
Masked Weaver	<i>Ploceus velatus</i>	31	2	6,4
Titbabbler	<i>Parisoma subcaeruleum</i>	29	8	27,5
Redfaced Mousebird	<i>Colius indicus</i>	19		
Laughing Dove	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	17	2	11,7
Yellow Canary	<i>Serinus flaviventris</i>	13		
Pied Barbet	<i>Lybius leucomelas</i>	12		
Blackchested Prinia	<i>Prinia flavicans</i>	11	1	9,0
Fiscal Shrike	<i>Lanius collaris</i>	11	1	9,0
Lesser Honeyguide	<i>Indicator minor</i>	11		
Cape Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia capicola</i>	10		
Malachite Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia famosa</i>	4		
Fiscal Flycatcher	<i>Sigelus silens</i>	4		
Karoo Robin	<i>Erythropygia coryphoeus</i>	3	1	33,3
Garden Warbler	<i>Sylvia borin</i>	3		
Willow Warbler	<i>Hippolais icterina</i>	3		
Fairy Flycatcher	<i>Senostira scita</i>	3		
Longbilled Crombec	<i>Sylvietta rufescens</i>	3		
Crested Barbet	<i>Trachyphonus vaillantii</i>	3		
Neddikky	<i>Cisticola fulvicapilla</i>	3		
Scimitar-billed Woodhoopoe	<i>Phoeniculus cyanomelas</i>	2		
Diederik Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx caprius</i>	2		
Whitebellied Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia talatala</i>	2		
Layard's Titbabbler	<i>Parisoma layardi</i>	2	1	50,0
Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	2		
Bokmakierie	<i>Telophorus zeylonus</i>	1		
Blackthroated Canary	<i>Serinus atrogularis</i>	1		
Cape Weaver	<i>Ploceus capensis</i>	1		
Cardinal Woodpecker	<i>Dendropicos fuscescens</i>	1		
Whitebacked Mousebird	<i>Colius colius</i>	1	1	100,0
Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba guinea</i>	1		
Wattled Starling	<i>Creatophora cinerea</i>	1		
Greater Striped Swallow	<i>Hirundo cucullata</i>	1		
Cape Canary	<i>Serinus canicollis</i>	1		
Totals		729	52	7,13

Table 2. Numbers ringed and recaptured at Oliewenhuis: August 1988 – November 1994.

Year ringed	Number ringed	Number caught after				
		<1 yr	>1 yr	>2 yr	>3 yr	>4 yr
1988	72	7	2	1	2	2
1989	66	1	4	0	3	1
1990	176	5	2	3	2	
1991	43	2	1	1	1	
1992	150	5	2			
1993	136	1				
1994	83	1				
Total	729	22	11	5	8	3

Table 3. Age of the 18 oldest birds recaptured at Oliewenhuis up to November 1994.

Species	Ring no.	Age ringed	Mths elapsed	Min. age (yrs)
Cape White-eye	X67219	Adult	27	>2,2
	X67318	Adult	34	>2,8
	AB68782	Adult	41	>3,4
	X62165	Adult	44	>3,6
	X62168	Adult	45	>3,7
Redeyed Bulbul	BB97821	Adult	28	>2,3
	BB97851	Adult	39	>3,2
Cape Robin	BB97896	Adult	22	>1,8
Olive Thrush	4-85422	Adult	28	>2,3
	4-85463	Adult	38	>3,1
Titbabbler	AB81145	Adult	20	>1,6
	AB70112	Adult	41	>3,4
	AB68753	Adult	48	>4,0
Layard's Titbabbler	AB70117	Adult	16	>1,3
Blackchested Prima	AB68789	Adult	36	>3,0
Cape Sparrow	BC03456	Adult	51	>4,2
Masked Weaver	BC10528	Juven.	36	3,0
	BC03461	Adult	58	>4,8

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