

we approached, in contrast, they put on their customary noisy begging performance.

Their refusal to accept food from the starlings frustrated both us and the adult birds. In desperation we taped the begging calls of the chicks and played it when the adults next visited. This immediately had the desired effect and the chicks, on hearing their own begging calls, perked up, opened their beaks and accepted food from the adults. The latter then set up a regular pattern of feeding visits. To alleviate the strain of their catering for two broods, we continued feeding our chicks at a reduced level and provided supplementary food for the adults. Over the next three days the female made the majority of visits to the chicks, while the male continued to gather food but either transferred it to her, or went off to feed his biological brood down the road. The chicks also became increasingly wary of us, which was no bad thing. On 6 January, the parents stopped bringing food and the female led two of the chicks out of the cage at 11h00. The third left a little later but was immediately set upon by the male, who vigorously pecked and jostled it. We replaced the chick in the cage and it finally left unmolested at 17h00.

Although the successful fledging was a happy outcome, the story did not end there. The female of the adoptive pair had been ringed nearby on 6 January 1991 by Terry Oatley in

one of his pre-dusk swoops (see Oatley & Fraser 1992). She was retrapped by us while feeding the chicks and on New Year's Day 1994 she was caught again, this time with a different mate (also ringed by Terry, on 20 September 1992) collecting food for another brood. On 27 October 1994, she was electrocuted at Dido Valley, not far from Glencairn. A month prior to that, one of her adopted brood was found dead, thought to have been shot, across the valley at Glencairn Heights, 21 months after fledging. We would not be surprised, given the high recovery rate of the species, to hear of the other chicks in due course.

All quite a saga, and quite enough material for one of the more lurid soapies. More importantly we have, through ringing, demonstrated chick adoption, simultaneous double-broodedness (after a fashion), mate and brood infidelity, chick survival and anthropogenic causes of mortality. Not bad for three chicks which could have ended their days under a pile of rubble or in the deep freeze.

Redwinged Starlings continue to be remarkably productive in terms of recoveries and retraps and we encourage ringers to target the species whenever they can.

#### REFERENCE

OATLEY, T. & FRASER, M. 1992. Red-ringed Redwinged Starlings. *Safring News* 21: 43-49.

## VOËLBERINGING KAN GEVAARLIK WEES

**Dawie de Swardt**

*Nasionale Museum, Posbus 266, Bloemfontein*

Wanneer ek nette oprig om voëls te vang, is my doelgroep gewoonlik Jangroentjies en ander middelslag voëls. Tydens 'n onlangse besoek aan Ficksburg was dit egter 'n ander storie.

Aangesien die klein veldaalwyntjies gedurende September blom, het ek dié keer my nette in die rantjies opgerig. Van Woens-

dag af was ek op my pos, wat ek al vir die afgelope vyf jaar besoek. Ek het vyf Jangroentjies gevang, maar Donderdag het ek moedeloos uur na uur na leë nette gestap. 'n Groot skok het vir my gewag in een van my nuwe, sterker nette – 'n Edelvalk ('n roofvoël vir die wat nie weet nie!) het vermoedelik 'n duif gejaag en is in die proses in my net gevang!

Wel, ek moet die voël uit die net kry (hulle weeg ± 600 g) en ek is daarby nog alleen ook! Roofvoëls se gevaarlikste wapen is hulle skerp kloue en ek weet dat ek hulle ten alle koste moet vermy. Met my linkerhand het ek die

voël mooi om sy nek en skouers beet (dit is voordelig om groot hande te hê!) en begin sy pote uit die net losmaak. Natuurlik blaas hy vir my, maar ek is in ekstase oor my groot vangs! Na 'n gesukkel het ek die valk uit die net en moet na my ringplek beweeg om hom te bering. Dit is natuurlik 'n ring-"lifer" vir my en dit gaan enige ander beringer groen maak van jaloesie. Eintlik vang 'n mens roofvoëls met 'n Balcatri-strik. Dit is spesifiek ontwerp om roofvoëls te vang.

Toe doen ek natuurlik die verkeerde ding. Aangesien ek die voël in my linkerhand het, probeer ek met my ander hand 'n houvas op sy pote kry. Toe gryp hy my! Dit lyk of sy oopgesperde pote na iets in die lug soek, en sy kloue sink in my vingers in! Nou het ek 'n probleem. Vir geen geld ter wêreld gaan ek die voël vrylaat nie, maar ek moet my vingers

loskry! En 'n mens het net twee hande. Gelukkig het ek tande ook (ek gebruik my tande baie, bv. om toue en nette vas te hou) en ek probeer desperaat om my vingers te bevry, net sodat sy ander poot my ken vasgryp! (Stel jou voor - ek hou die voël vas en hy vir my! - een moet los!)

Na 'n stryd waarin ek die valk met my knie op die grond vasgedruk het, is my ken en my vingers bevry. My 800 m se stap na OB 46609 het soos 'n uur gevoel en ek kon net die ring 779501 aan sy poot sit en hom laat vlieg! Ek kon nie eers 'n foto neem van die pragtige voël nie.

Na die ondervinding het ek tot die gevolgtrekking gekom dat 'n mens ENIGE voël in jou nette kan verwag, veral nou dat SAFRING baie duursame nette versaf, en dat 'n mens voorbereid moet wees vir so 'n groot vangs!

