

BIRD RINGING AT 'TWINSTREAMS', MTUNZINI, ZULULAND

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The farm Twinstreams, immediately south of Mtunzini village in coastal Zululand is the property of Mr. Ian Garland, without whose help and encouragement this ringing project would not have been possible. Twinstreams is a highly favoured bird-watching locality among Natal and Zululand bird-watchers and even attracts visitors from considerably further afield. Ian Garland, eminent in local bird club and nature conservation circles, has produced a checklist of the birds of Twinstreams as part of the P.F.I.A.O. Avifauna Series (no.46).

My own association with Ian and Twinstreams began in 1953 when a Natal Bird Club camp was held there. Ringing however, only commenced in 1961. I have now spent a total of 162 days at Twinstreams during the past twenty years, and ringing activities occupied 139 of them. In addition to my own observations I have been able to draw on Ian's extensive knowledge as well as from Field Cards submitted to the Natal Bird Club's scheme by visitors to Twinstreams. The ringing bouts have always served a double role, one to study the birds, the other to train young aspirant ringers. Over forty people have assisted me over the years at Twinstreams.

The capture of birds has been effected by the use of mist nets, and in recent times as much as 2000 feet of nets have been set at one time. The habitat is essentially a forest habitat, the surrounding areas being sugar-cane fields. In all 1447 birds have been ringed in this difficult environment and 1311 recaptures made. Seventy-four species were ringed. I shall comment only on a few selected species here.

The TAMBOURINE DOVE is a common resident of the forest and 82 have been ringed with 97 recaptures. The longest-lived ringed bird almost attained 7 years. Usually only a single pair of NATAL KINGFISHERS is resident in the trapping area, but occasionally two pairs may be present. Nevertheless 63 have been ringed and 67 recaptures made. The recaptures were largely of the resident birds, the number ringed being inflated during the migration of the species north and south during April and September.

Only one TRUMPETER HORNBILL has been trapped in the  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch mesh net. It required three helpers to 'pacify' this bird during the ringing operation as it did not take kindly to being handled. By far the commonest species at Twinstreams is the GOLDEN-RUMPED TINKER BARBET. No fewer than 251 individuals have been ringed and 229 recaptures effected. There are seasonal influxes of this species into the area presumably in search of food provided by the flowering and fruiting trees. The longest-lived ringed bird is four years two months.

Eighty YELLOW-BELLIED BULBULS have been ringed with eighty-one recaptures. The most 'net-happy' individual was trapped twenty-four times over a period of 10 years 9 months. The rare NATAL THRUSH is a winter visitor to Twinstreams from southern Natal and Pondoland and seven have been ringed with fourteen recaptures, the oldest individual being trapped three years after ringing. CHORISTER ROBINS are also only present during the winter months, being migrants from the interior of Zululand. Nine have been trapped and five recaptures effected. The NATAL ROBIN is an abundant species, 172 having been ringed and 287 recaptures made. The species' abundance varies seasonally which suggest some form of migration in the species. The longest-lived individual was five years nine months.

Contrary to expectations a HEUGLINS ROBIN was trapped and ringed. This record constitutes a considerable extension south of its previous known range. Six CAPE ROBINS have been ringed, this being a winter visitor from the interior of Zululand. The BLEATING BUSH WARBLER has yielded thirty-nine individuals and forty-one recaptures have been made. The oldest bird so far is four years and eight months. The DUSKY FLYCATCHER is likewise a winter visitor, largely from the Cape Province. Eighteen have been ringed and 10 recaptured. One was retrapped seven years and one month after ringing. Nine WATTLE-EYED FLYCATCHERS have been ringed and five recaptures effected. Only one pair inhabits the ringing area, the other seven captured being the young of this pair. The female of the adult pair was retrapped four years eleven months after it was ringed. The broods of the 1969/70, 1971/72 and 1972/73 summers have been trapped and ringed.

PARADISE FLYCATCHERS are largely winter visitors, thirty-eight have been ringed and only seven recaptured. This species is most abundant at the same times as the NATAL KINGFISHER as it migrates at the same time. The OLIVE SUNBIRD is also a very common species, 205 have been ringed and 382 recaptures effected. The longest lived individual was seven years and nine months.

With these few comments this brief note is closed. The information gathered will provide some interesting facts about the birds of this part of Zululand.