

For the numbered ring the number of unique marks is increased to 329, 408 and 643 respectively. A table showing this three band system is available on request.

This type of colour band has been tried so far on House Sparrows, Masked Weavers, Fiscal Shrikes and Kittlitz Plover (A.J.Tree). There is as yet no evidence of ring loss, hardening of plastic, rusting of staples, colour fading, injury to the bird or any other problem in some thirty recaptures and scores of sightings after up to three months of use. Thus, though not fully tried, this seems a promising and economical method. It is probable that it would suit birds which have wider tarsi than 2-size, provided a hand riveting device was used instead of a stapler. Strips of this polythene or larger diameter tubing could be used to make colour bands of any size.

TABLE OF COLOUR BAND POSITIONS (one or two bands per bird)

First Two Colours (AB)		Additional Colours (C)	
right leg	left leg	right leg	left leg
A	*	C	*/
*	A	A	*/
B	*	C	*/
*	B	B	*/
A/B	*	C	*/
*	A/B	C	*
B/A	*	C	C
*	B/A	A/C	*
A/A	*	*	A/C
*	A/A	C/A	*
B/B	*	*	C/A
*	B/B	B/C	*
A	*/	A	B/C
B	*/	B	*
A	*/	B	C/B
B	*/	A	*
		C/C	C/C

* position normally occupied by numbered ring or */ optional leg.

TOTAL COMBINATIONS PER COLOUR GROUP

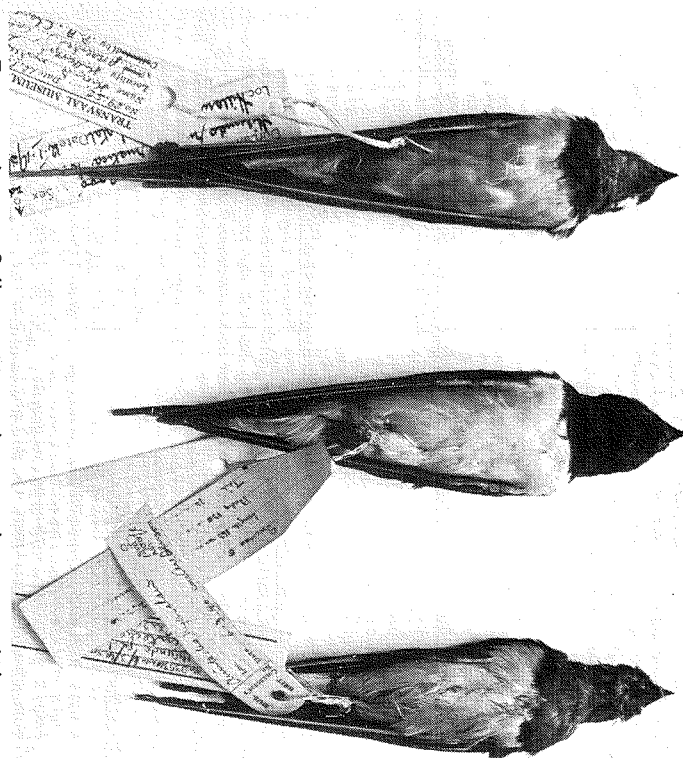
ABC	33	(AA5, BB5, CC5, AB6, AC6, BC6)
ABCD	36	(ditto plus DD5, DA6, DB6, DC6)
ABCDE	85	(ditto plus EE5, EA6, EB6, EC6, ED6)
ABCDEF	120	(ditto plus FF5, FA6, FB6, FC6, FE6)
ABCDEFG	161	(ditto plus GG5, GA6, GB6, GC6, GE6, GF6)

For eight colours(ABCDEFGH), if obtainable, 208, (ditto plus 47).

RACES OF THE EUROPEAN SWALLOW - *Hirundo rustica*

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As far as is known, only two races of *Hirundo rustica* L. overwinter in southern Africa, namely the nominate race, *H.r. rustica* and *H.r. gutturalis* (Clancy, Durban Museum Novitates 27.2.70). The latter breeds in Eastern Asia. It has been established that birds of this race reach southern Africa on migration and there are a number of specimens in our museums. Although these have so far only been obtained in



Two specimens of *H.r. gutturalis* are shown on either side of *H.r. rustica*, illustrating the chestnut penetration of the breast band.

Natal, Rhodesia and Botswana within our region, as well as Tanzania, Zambia and Malawi north of the Zambesi, there is evidence to suggest that they also occur in the Transvaal and possibly other parts of South Africa. Swallow ringers should, therefore be on the alert and carefully examine any deviate bird coming to hand.

In *H.r. gutturalis* the chestnut of the throat patch is possibly a little paler than in *H.r.r.* but the most signif-

important characteristic is that the chestnut penetrates the breast band and frequently to such an extent that only remnants remain on either side of the chest. There is no difference in size although wing length is slightly more in the nominate race.

It appears that H.r.gutturalis arrives rather late in southern Africa - possibly only in January - and is present until late in the season. This is borne out by the fact that a number of specimens from Rhodesia and Natal were collected in May and even early June (1).

In the 1971/72 ringing season a number of birds with the characteristics described above were found in Pretoria whereas in the past season only H.r.rustica were caught. This is possibly due to the cessation of ringing activities on that site in January as the roost was abandoned by the birds at that time. However, the effect of climatic variations on the spread of H.r.gutturalis should not be ruled out.

IDENTIFYING, AGEING & SEXING THE RED BISHOP & THE CAPE WIDOW

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In areas where the Red Bishop Euplectes orix and the Cape Widow Collinpasser capensis are found together, the correct identification of females and non-breeding males may prove difficult. Most Red Bishop males do not breed until they are two years old and thus do not assume full breeding plumage in their first year. The following hints should help any ringer to correctly identify, age and sex both species.

Red Bishop Euplectes orix

Adult male in breeding plumage : unmistakable.

Adult male in eclipse plumage : wing length 75 - 80mm (maximum chord), culmen is slightly heavier and larger than in females (♂ 15 - 16mm, ♀ 13.5 - 14mm according to Roberts).

1 ♀ male : these cannot be distinguished from adult males in eclipse plumage, but in the breeding season they are best identified by the longer wing length as compared with females (♂ 75mm and over) and by their larger culmen.

Females : except when very young, these birds cannot be aged. When newly fledged the young birds retain traces of the yellow gape for a short period. Wing length of females - normal range from 68 - 72mm.

Birds do occur with intermediate wing measurements and these cannot usually be sexed with any certainty.

Cape Widow Collinpasser capensis

Adult male in breeding plumage : unmistakable.

Adult male in eclipse plumage : wing length from 80 - 85mm is longer than for the Red Bishop, birds retain some yellow feathers on shoulder and rump.

Female : has shorter wing length than males, usually from 73 - 75mm, but wing is longer than Red Bishop females. Sometimes has yellowish feathers on shoulder which the Red Bishop never does. Culmen is larger and more heavily built than in the Red Bishop (♂ 17.5 - 19mm, ♀ 16.5mm per Roberts).

The above information applies to birds in the Cape Peninsula, I have no information on birds in other parts of their range.

AGEING THE KITTLITZ PLOVER

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Although the Kittlitz Plover Charadrius pecuarius has been handled and ringed more than any other indigenous wader in southern Africa remarkably little is known about ageing and sexing technique.

Before going further I should like to mention for the sake of beginners to wader ringing who may have difficulty in separating young Kittlitz from young White-Fronted Plover Charadrius marginatus that the easiest and quickest way to separate them is to have a look at their wings. In the Kittlitz, at all ages, the entire leading edge of the wing is dark blackish brown (though this is hidden a little in the juvenile by the feathers having pale edging) and this together with the blackish primaries and secondaries gives the bird an appearance, both in the hand and in flight, of having blackish wings with a pale brown patch in the centre, i.e. the median and inner greater wing coverts.

In our region most Kittlitz Plover breed from July to November, though this year there has been considerable breeding activity at Lake McIlwaine, near Salisbury, since April, thus juvenile birds have been found on the wing since late May, while normally they would only appear in September or October as was the case at L.McIlwaine in 1972.

The juvenile plumage is lost in a few months as the