

Availability

The W.B.C. put its new colour-ring design to the NUBRA Technical Subcommittee. The design was approved and the Unit will be stocking supplies of the 24.0mm vulture ring. The Unit will also be investigating the possibility of obtaining other colour-ring sizes in Darvic and it is likely that 16.0mm and possibly 10.0mm rings will be available. For the six available colours, the price is likely to be around R5 per 100 for 24.0mm and R4 per 100 for 16.0mm rings. Enquiries should be directed to the writer or to NUBRA.

Acknowledgements

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the assistance of many W.B.C. ringers whose imaginative minds and varied skills have made the Darvic ring possible: Richard Sadler, Mike Fagan and Paul Whitehouse did the necessary machining work, Frank von Maltitz designed and supplied the trimming device and also cuts the sheets, while Manfred Schmitt is especially thanked for arranging the weathering test and for designing the Mark 2 die. Several others are acknowledged for spending their free hours making rings, and Peter Mundy (University of Rhodesia) has kindly provided information on his experience with colour-rings on vultures in the field.

References

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A NEW DESIGN OF PLIERS FOR REMOVING BADLY FITTED RINGS

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In the British Trust for Ornithology publication "Ringers Bulletin" Vol.4 No.3 dated July 1973, Mr. J. Ely wrote an article on a design of pliers to remove badly fitted rings. It occurred to me that Mr. Ely's design was both cumbersome and almost impossible to use when working single-handed (as is the case on my ringing excursions). Accordingly I asked Mr. R. Klomfass, Senior Technical Officer at the Human Anatomy Department, University of the Witwatersrand, if he could design a more practical set of pliers. He then made what I consider to be a very useful addition to my ringing equipment.

An old surgical instrument was used which works on the same principal as circlip pliers. The attachment and some of the nose of the pliers was cut away so that the spread was not too great, then an angled groove 2mm deep and 1mm wide was cut 1mm from the end of the nose of the pliers. (Ordinary circlip pliers could also be modified in the same way).

The grooves must not be at right angles to the sides of the pliers or they will not grip the ring and open it but instead will slide to the widest points of the diameter of the ring.

To remove a ring the two points on the tip are inserted up between the ring and the leg with the pliers closed and then slight pressure is applied to the handles to open the ring in order that it might be slipped off the bird's leg.

The pliers work very well on rings made of aluminium and stainless steel of sizes ranging from 2.3mm to 6.0mm. There must be enough room between leg and ring to insert the point of the pliers.

I record my grateful thanks to Mr. Klomfass for his help and assistance with the design and making of these pliers.
