

LOCAL NEWS

NON-OPERATION FLAMINGO

In July 1974 the Division of Nature Conservation and Tourism in South West Africa attempted a trial ringing effort on flamingo chicks at the Etosha Pan breeding grounds. A helicopter and an amphibious two-man vehicle were used to carry a 16 man team and nets into the mud flats where temporary pens were erected. En route to the main colonies, a dried-out nesting site with a remnant 50 Greater Flamingo chicks allowed a "dry run" in which the birds were caught and colour-ringed, besides receiving the metal rings. Unfortunately, it proved impossible in the remaining time to capture any of the three large nurseries of Lesser Flamingoes (3 000 - 8 000 chicks each) on the wet mudflats. The amphibious "buggy" proved useless in this terrain, and after several hours of unsuccessful herding with the helicopter towards a net and sacking enclosure on drier mud, darkness forced a stop to the operations. The unexpected sudden withdrawal of the helicopter for other "urgent" operations the next day precluded any further attempts at flamingo catching. Grand result: 50 Greater and two Lesser Flamingo chicks ringed. However, a great deal was learned from this flop. Grossly visible pens on the mudflats are out. Several different alternative strategies can be tried. Next time, it could be a different story.

R. Jensen, Senior Professional Officer (Ornithology), Windhoek.

DEGENERATE DOVE

... No. 5-21341; a graphic example of disintegration of character. The bird, bemused by being trapped in February returns again and then again. By the end of a fortnight it is completely pauperized and traps itself every second day for a hand-out. It moves into the Sanctuary and eventually takes to roosting in the tree above the trap.

With no will of its own, drugged by mixed seed, its degradation is complete and while in a gorged condition it is picked up by a passing genet as it staggers along to get trapped for the 124th time. ...

Letter from E. Middlemiss, Rondevlei Bird Sanctuary, Dec. 4, 1973.

NEW AGEING CODE???

The following comment on the age of an African Marsh Harrier (R. 167) was made by the finder Stephen Hliwayo ...

"For its age I can't prefer any age, but it was getting old to its appearance.."

Would that all ringers were so specific!!!

DIET OF THE THICK BILLED WEAVER

The following plea was received from one of our ringers:

"... can you suggest a suitable ring for Thick Billed Weavers, they eat the 4,3 Incoloy rings!"

S.A.O.S. SYMPOSIUM 1975

The symposium will be held at Wankie in July 1975, the gremlins permitting, after this issue of SAFRING reaches you. During the symposium there will be a meeting of ringers to discuss ringing and its bearing on problems of migration and movements. A report on the Symposium will appear in the next issue of SAFRING.

RECENT RECOVERIES

The following recoveries are listed for ringers' interest. The listing does not constitute full publication and the data may not be used by anyone but the original ringer, without permission.

LONGEVITY:

R. 90	Shelduck <u>Tadorna cana</u>	(W.R. Siegfried)
First year	24.03.65 Voelvlei	33.23 S 19.03
Shot	08.04.75 Uppington	28.12 S 21.27
R.867	Streaky-headed Seed Eater <u>Poliospiza guianis</u>	(C. Hodgson)
Adult	30.08.65 Penhalonga, Rhodesia	18.52 S 32.40
Shot	09.03.75 " " "	" " "

DISPERSAL:

R.7	Wandering Albatross <u>Diomedea exulans</u>	
Adult	30.08.73 New South Wales, Australia	34.20 S 150.57
Control	27.01.75 Marion Island	46.53 S 37.52
R.493	European Swallow <u>Hirundo rustica</u>	(A.D.S. Hewitt)
Adult	03.02.74 Melrose Dam	26.08 S 28.04
Control	04.11.74 Found at Hagnau, Germany	47.40 N 09.19
	Flown to, and released Athens	37.58 N 23.43

Another of Mr. Hewitt's birds (also Hirundo rustica) was recovered and airlifted in October 1974. SAFRING 3: Vol 3.

LESS RECENT RECOVERIES

R.61	Cattle Egret <u>Bubulcus ibis</u>	
Pullus	10.01.60 Pretoria	25.41 S 28.11
Killed	24.04.60 Kampolombo, Zambia	11.37 S 29.42

This was reported to the Zoo on May 9, 1960, and was not processed due to lack of primary data. On April 20, 1975, we obtained a file, containing primary data, but the recovery letter lacked mention of country of origin. We finally traced it to Zambia.

EARLIEST RECOVERY IN SOUTH AFRICA

R.80 White stork Ciconia ciconia

Ringed in Germany, killed by hailstorm in the Harrismith district of the OFS. Reported in the Harrismith Chronicle and letter in the S. Afr. J. Nat. His. Vol. 1(1) p. 115; 1918.

Two other early records of White Storks ringed in Denmark and recovered in Basutoland (Lesotho) and near Zastron, OFS, are reported in the same journal in 1920 and 1922.

AT LAST, A UNIVERSAL RING?

Ring number A-10968 was reported to the Pretoria Zoo as being found on a dead bird. The ring of that number was placed on a European Swallow at Rosherville, Johannesburg. Wits Bird Club, with their customary diligence, followed up the report by visiting the finder. They learnt from the vague descriptions of the bird that it could not have been a European Swallow, but far more likely a Sacred Ibis.

Was this a case of a duplicate ring series? Certainly many years ago an "A" series was used on larger species such as the Cattle Egrets and Sacred Ibis. However, it only ran to 10000 and not to 10968. It is most likely that the finder did not read the ring number properly. A pity that all the work in ringing, reporting and recording this bird should have been in vain. While we have scotched the universal ring possibility, there seems little way of verifying reported ring numbers unless the ring accompanies the report.

EVEN RINGS GO ASTRAY

As a sequel to the above, although it did not follow precisely in time; a letter was received from the Pretoria Zoo, from a person in the Ivory Coast, reporting a ringed bird recovered there. The finder wrote "Attention bague" on his letter, but unfortunately the ring was lost in transit. Thus we do not know whether it was one of Mundy's vultures recovered, or more likely, a Common Tern. Who knows -- tantalizing!

AND YET ANOTHER:

Another recent recovery of a "P" ring (used on Penguins) -- this ring was taped onto a brown piece of paper, with an address written on, but scratched out. Pretoria Zoo duly forwarded it, and this time we were lucky, being able to decipher the scratched out address and write off to the finder for details.

All ringers have a lot to say about what they do. This is only natural and reflects a high degree of enthusiastic involvement. Apparently many of you are just waiting to be asked to write about your activities and findings. This being the case, then a request is put to everyone to please contribute to SAFRING as regularly as possible.

The present policy of SAFRING is to provide ideas and information. Within this framework each ringer could contribute to SAFRING, simply by letting us know of his activities. This information could take the form of an outline of a person's ringing project, what he is trying to find out, what techniques he uses and what difficulties he has encountered and solved, and what his findings are to date.

This might sound like a progress report, but it serves to (i) keep people informed on the activities of others, (ii) get you to think about your ringing and (iii) put it open to appraisal and suggestion. Two difficulties are immediately apparent. The "professionals" might object to having to do this and would not co-operate. A pity, but we cannot regulate the activities and attitudes of such people. The other difficulty is that people may take their reports to SAFRING as being official publication and thus feel no obligation to write up for a scientific journal. Well, fair enough, provided the writer is honest enough to recognize this.

There is another source of material for SAFRING which ringers have available. That is ageing and sexing criteria for many of our birds. Ringers often have detailed knowledge of species of birds which they mistakenly think that other persons know about. This type of information is often lost, and is also needed for the new Ringer's Manual. So if you have this type of information, no matter what the species, make it available for publication in SAFRING.

So ringers, it is up to you all, and all contributions will be gratefully received.

RINGER'S MANUAL

A new and enlarged Ringer's Manual is being prepared. This is largely due to the fine efforts of John Ledger and his merry men of the Wits. Bird Club.

Ringers are invited to send any suggestions and contributions for the manual to the Bird Ringing Unit. After all, you are the people who are going to use the manual and must have ideas about what you would like to see in it.

MIST NETS

The supply of mist nets is presenting difficulties. The factory making the terylene nets has stopped production. The only nets available are being made in Japan. They are of nylon which is not as good as the terylene. Even supplies of these nets are difficult to obtain, because we do not deal directly with the manufacturers. Instead nets are obtained from England, America and Germany.

The list below gives the type and sizes of nets which can be ordered. It is requested that ringers wishing to purchase nets should (i) place their orders as soon as possible (ii) quote the net type by the code rather than the size.

Those persons who have nets on order are asked to please reorder. The order list will close on the 1st of August 1975, and no more orders will be taken until 1976.

The prices of the nets are best estimated on the current exchange rates and may be different when the nets are supplied.

CODE	LENGTH (metres)	HEIGHT (metres)	MESH (mm)	SHELVES	COUNTRY	PRICES
G1	6	1,2	24	2	Germany	DM 9,40
A1	"	2,4	24	4	USA	5,70 dollars
E1	"	2,6	30	4	UK	£ 5,00
A2	"	2,6	30	4	USA	4,85 dollars
A3	"	2,6	36	4	USA	4,50
E2	"	2,6	36	3	UK	£ 3,15
G2	"	2,7	38	3	Germany	DM15,75
G3	"	3,6	38	5	Germany	DM18,20
G4	6	2,0	24	4	Germany	DM20,00
E3	"	1,0	30	1	UK	£ 2,35
E4	"	1,0	30	1	UK	£ 2,35
E5	"	2,6	36	1	UK	£ 4,25
G5	"	2,0	38	4	Germany	DM16,50
A4	12	2,6	24	4	USA	9,65 dollars
G6	"	2,6	24	5	Germany	DM39,50
A5	"	2,6	30	4	USA	8,00 dollars
A6	"	2,6	36	4	USA	8,70
E6	"	2,6	36	4	UK	£ 5,55
G7	"	3,6	38	5	Germany	DM31,00
G8	"	4,2	38	5	Germany	DM35,00
A7	"	2,6	50	4	USA	7,80 dollars
A8	"	2,6	120	2	USA	7,00
G9	18	2,0	24	6	Germany	DM48,20
E7	"	2,6	30	4	UK	£11,55
E8	"	2,6	36	4	UK	£ 7,50
G10	"	2,6	60	6	Germany	DM69,50
G11	"	4,5	120	5	Germany	DM75,00

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Information is needed on methods for ageing and sexing Turdus spp., particularly the Olive Thrush, Turdus olivaceus (R.553). Ringers are requested to communicate with the Ringing Organizer.