REPORT ON THE KLAARSTROOM PROJECT, 1975/76

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A total of 300 birds of 34 species was ringed, as against 296 birds of 34 species last year. Fifty-four birds of 17 species were recaptured, a recapture rate of 15% of all birds caught. The most numerous species ringed were the Cape Sparrow Passer melanurus (63), the Masked Weaver Ploceus velatus (48) and the Pale White-eye Zosterops pallida (45). Owing to my absence overseas no ringing was done in June.

Scrutiny of the recaptures since the project began suggests interesting conclusions on the longevity of the different species. Since the age at ringing is mostly unknown and the recaptured birds were released alive, no conclusions can be drawn as to the exact longevity but a comparison of the average intervals between ringing and recapture (the last recapture in the case of birds caught several times) shows that the mortality rates, and hence the population structure, of some of the species varies very much. The figures are set out in Table I.

TABLE I

INTERVALS BETWEEN RINGING AND RECAPTURE FOR VARIOUS SPECIES

Species	Number of Individuals	Average Interval in days	Maximum Interval in days
Colius colius	16	98	539
Parisoma subcaeruleum	4	425	1057
Cossypha caffra	21	246	1014
Lanius collaris	7	372	1108
Zosterops pallida	29	573	1785
Passer melanurus	45	178	753
Ploceus capensis	37	237	765
Ploceus velatus	50	206	1255

The much greater average interval between the recaptures of the small, insectivorous bush-dwellers, Parisoma and Zosterops, than those of the open-country, graminivorous Passer and Ploceus spp. and, still more, the frugivorous Colius, is very striking. In this connection, the open country, but insectivorous Lanius is intermediate but the bush-dwelling Cossypha conforms more closely to the seed-eaters. It may be mentioned that the only two recaptures of another small, bush-dwelling insectivore, Apalis thoracica, were at intervals of 332 and 1801 days (i.e. almost five years in the second example and the longest interval for any Klaarstroom species!