

REPORT ON THE KLAARSTROOM PROJECT, 1978 - 1979

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The total number of birds ringed during the period was 393 of 40 species. This is considerably in excess of any previous total and is chiefly due to the assistance of Mr G D Underhill in April-May 1979. Two species not previously ringed were taken, the Fairy Tit-babbler Parisoma layardi and the Boubou Laniarius ferrugineus. Another Tchagra Tchagra tchagra, of which the first was ringed last year, was also taken.

The most numerous species ringed were : Masked Weaver Ploceus velatus, 51; Pale White-eye Zosterops pallida, 44; Cape Weaver P. capensis, 37; Cape Sparrow Passer melanurus, 33; Cape Canary Serinus canicollis, 30; Common Waxbill Estrilda astrild 25; Laughing Dove Streptopelia senegalensis, 24; and Red Bishop Euplectes orix, 19.

The number of re-traps was 79, also a record, representing 17% of all birds caught. The most numerous were the White-eye (15) and the Masked Weaver (11). However, other species showed a higher ratio of re-capture to ringing. Thus the Cape Bulbul Pycnonotus capensis showed seven re-captures to 15 newly ringed; the Cape Coly Colius colius four to six; the Marsh Warbler Acrocephalus baeticatus five to ten; the Tit-babbler Parisoma subcaeruleum three to one (!); and the Fiscal Lanius collaris six to six. In these species, therefore, a substantial proportion of the entire population has been ringed.

Another interesting feature has been the re-capture of birds ringed originally five or more years previously, e.g. a Fiscal ringed in October 1972 re-trapped (for the third time) in April, 1979; a Cape Robin Cossypha caffra, also ringed in October 1972 and re-trapped (for the second time) in April 1979; and another, ringed in the same month, re-trapped (for

the second time) in May 1979.

Two species were recorded on the farm for the first time in this period, a Stonechat Saxicola torquata during a cold spell in October 1978 and a Black Crow Corvus capensis in December. The first was probably a bird driven down by the weather from the Swartberge and the second a stray from the Karoo further north. Other seldom-recorded species included a Greenshank Tringa nebularia and a party of Karoo Green Warblers Eremomela gregalis.

BRIGHT - RINGED PULLI

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Recently I ringed some Dusky Flycatcher Muscicapa adusta pulli. After the chicks had been replaced in the nest, the adults continued with feeding. After a few feeding visits, one adult bird was observed to be pulling at a ring on a chick.

The rings being of a silver colour, resemble the faecal sacs and as a result the adult birds try to remove them. The parents tug so violently, that the chicks could be injured or even pulled right out of the nest.

I suggest that anybody ringing pulli with bright rings (stainless steel or aluminium), should blacken them first. If colour-ringing is being undertaken, combinations using bright colours such as white, light green, light blue and yellow, should be avoided, or the offending rings should be blackened. An indelible marker seems to be adequate for the purpose and will wear off shortly after the bird leaves the nest.