

ADU Guide 5

# SAFRING

## Bird Ringing Manual

S.J. de Beer

G.M. Lockwood

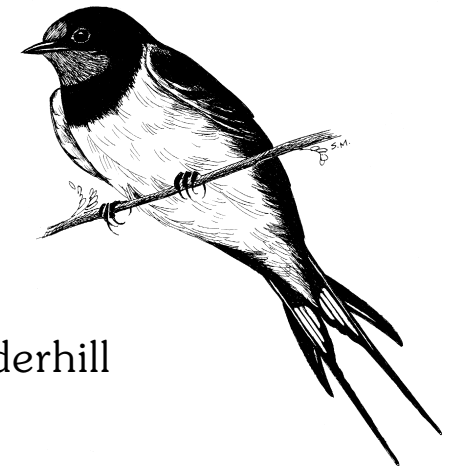
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L.G. Underhill

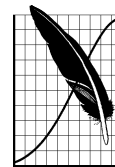


Cape Town, July 2001

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Avian Demography Unit

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The Avian Demography Unit (ADU) is a research unit of the University of Cape Town. It conducts research in partnership with BirdLife South Africa. The ADU provides a channel through which birders can make a unique and significant input to the science of ornithology. BirdLife South Africa members form a network of observers who contribute data to projects coordinated by the ADU. The ADU produces the newsletter *Bird Numbers* twice a year.

The mission of the Avian Demography Unit is to contribute to the improved understanding of bird populations, especially bird population dynamics, and thus make a contribution to bird conservation. The Avian Demography Unit achieves this through mass-participation projects, long-term monitoring, innovative statistical modelling, and population-level interpretation of results. The emphasis is on the curation, analysis, publication and dissemination of data.

*ADU Guides* provide information on projects of the Avian Demography Unit at the University of Cape Town.

Birders interested in being involved in projects of the ADU should write to: Avian Demography Unit, University of Cape Town, Rondebosch 7701, South Africa, tel. (021) 650-2423, e-mail [adu@maths.uct.ac.za](mailto:adu@maths.uct.ac.za).

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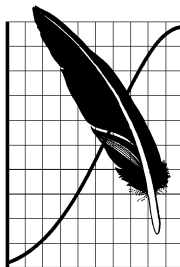
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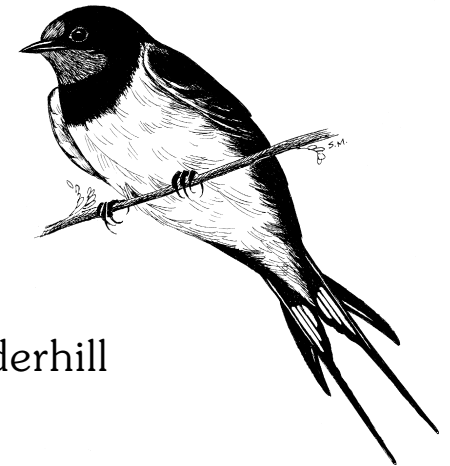
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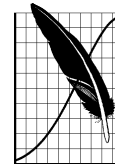
H.D. Oschadleus

L.G. Underhill



Cape Town, July 2001

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University of Cape Town, Rondebosch, 7701, South Africa  
Tel. (021) 650-2422/1  
Fax (021) 650-3434  
E-mail: adu@maths.uct.ac.za  
www.uct.ac.za/depts/stats/adu

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**Author addresses:**

**S.J. de Beer:** c/o Wesvaal Bird Club, PO Box 2413, Potchefstroom, 2520.  
samdb@iafrica.com

**G.M. Lockwood:** Delta Park Environmental Centre, PO Box 84701, Greenside, 2034.  
geoff@birdlife.org.za

**J.H.F.A. Raijmakers:** 23 Roy Campbell Street, Vanderbijl Park, 1911.

**J.M.H. Raijmakers:** PO Box 5067, Vanderbijl Park, 1900. raj0124@natref.com

**W.A. Scott:** Alberante Motors, PO Box 1349, Alberton, 1450.  
william.scott@bmwdealer.co.za

**H.D. Oschadleus:** SAFRING, Avian Demography Unit, University of Cape Town,  
Rondebosch, 7701. dieter@maths.uct.ac.za

**L.G. Underhill:** SAFRING, Avian Demography Unit, University of Cape Town,  
Rondebosch, 7701. lgu@maths.uct.ac.za

**Editors:** L.G. Underhill, T.B. Oatley and H.D. Oschadleus

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## Foreword

### A new manual for a new millennium!

It is now a quarter-century since John Ledger produced the first *Ringer's Manual* for use in southern Africa. At that time it was not just for the training of new ringers but was also for the guidance of the whole ringing community that had grown rather like Topsy and was in need of regularisation. Since then much has changed in ringing while much has remained the same. Most importantly, the manual has gone out of print and we needed to decide to either reprint it or replace it. John Bunning led the move to completely rewrite the manual and made a valuable contribution to the new text as well as nagging some of the more recalcitrant authors. Terry Oatley provided expert guidance in the early stages of the project.

We still catch birds, ring them, measure and weigh them and release them much as we have done for the first 50 years of bird ringing in southern Africa. However, some things have changed. The most important new development is computerisation. Most ringers are not aware that the real cost of a ring is about three times what the ringer pays for it, the major expense being the cost of administration. Experience around the world has shown that a significant cost reduction can be effected by fully computerising the complete data-collection process. This means that every ringer should enter all his/her ringing, resighting, recapture and recovery data him/herself. In Europe, fully computerising ringing data have also led to a massive increase in the value and utility of the data and to the productivity of the staff of the various ringing administrations.

This new Ringer's Manual is aimed primarily at new ringers and their trainers but will also be of value to existing ringers in helping them to maintain their standards and hopefully in encouraging them to extend their efforts to collect better and more useful data.

This new Ringer's Manual is the result of a collaborative effort by the seven authors aided and encouraged by Leslie Underhill and Dieter Oschadleus and their staff at SAFRING and the Avian Demography Unit. They are all to be congratulated on an excellent piece of work. I hope that this new manual will encourage both new and existing ringers to go out and ring more birds!

Steven Piper  
November 2000

# Acknowledgements

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the contributions of the following people on some very specific subjects. Dr T.B. Oatley for his contribution of the chapter '*The bird ringer and the law*' and Dr M. Herremans for his contribution of '*The use of plumage features resulting from a partial post-juvenile moult in age determination*' (including Fig. 6.9).

We are also indebted and grateful to Dr Terry Oatley for his time to review, correct and comment on the text. A special word of thanks to him for all his support, words of continuous encouragement and faith in the group of ringers conducting this task.

SASOL sponsored the printing of this Manual.

THIS GUIDE IS DEDICATED TO

*The late Frank Douwes, ringer and friend, and*

*John Bunning, ringer, for their contribution to ringing.*