

Overlap of incubation and primary moult in Crowned Plover

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A pair of Crowned Plovers *Vanellus coronatus* was found breeding on one of the sports fields of the University of Cape Town (33°57'S 18°27'E) in early November 2001. On taking a photograph of the incubating bird, we were surprised at how close (<0.5 m) we could approach. When the bird did move away two eggs were seen in the nest. On 16 November 2001, HDO returned to ring the bird and, after crawling slowly up to the bird, managed to catch it by hand. Once caught, it was ringed (D24652), but handling time was kept to a minimum so as not to keep it off the nest for too long. The wing length was 189 mm and primary moult was nearly complete with a score of 555555540. Further visits revealed the ringed bird to incubate most of the time and based on information in Tarboton (2001) we deduced that it was probably the female. The mate was seen nearby but was not captured. The chicks hatched successfully but soon moved away from the nest cup.

On 12 February 2002 the ringed bird was

found to be incubating again at a site within 20 m of the previous nest site. The second nest also contained two eggs. Urban *et al.* (1986) describe Crowned Plovers as being double-brooded in the Western Cape. This time the bird slipped off the nest when approached within 1 m. We returned on 13 February 2002 with a hand net and managed to recapture the bird. The outer primaries had worn down slightly to 185 mm. Interestingly, the bird had started primary moult again, having a score of 5552000000.

As far as we are aware, this is the first record of Crowned Plover undergoing primary moult while breeding. If other ringers have similar observations they should contact HDO.

References

- Tarboton, W. 2001. A guide to the nests & eggs of southern African birds. Cape Town: Struik.
Urban, E.K., Fry, C.H. & Keith, S. (eds). 1986. Birds of Africa. Vol 2. pp. 272–276. London: Academic Press.

