

# Afring News



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## **ADDITIONAL NOTES ON MOULT OF CAPE SISKINS *CRITHAGRA TOTTA***

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## ADDITIONAL NOTES ON MOULT OF CAPE SISKINS *CRITHAGRA TOTTA*

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Ward (2003a) reported on moult in Cape Siskins *Crithagra totta* and proposed a potential model to explain the little available data. This note reports on new moult data and further discusses the moult cycle of this species.

Eight siskins were ringed by VLW at Algeria, in the Cederberg Wilderness Area, Western Cape on 16/17 March 2003. Five of these birds were nearing the completion of primary moult and three had recently completed moult. An immature siskin (SAFRING W58714) was replacing its juvenile primaries with adult primaries, the latter having white tips (Ward 2001). An additional fourteen moult protocols were submitted to SAFRING by ringers (total of 23 siskins with moult present).

Cape Siskin moult data in the SAFRING database is biased towards the end of the moult cycle. Scores range from 0-8 (n=4) or 27-45 (n=19) (Fig. 1). The lower scores constitute moult in primaries 1 and 3 and the higher scores in primaries 5-9. There is no data for moult in primaries 2 and 4. The extant data suggests primary moult starts in early January and ends in late March through early May. More data is needed to better resolve moult timing in Cape Siskins.

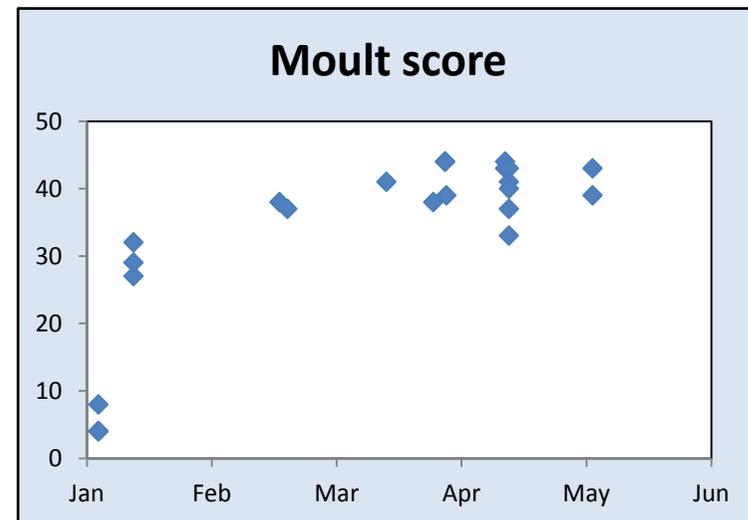
The moulting immature siskin ringed in the Cederberg confirms the model proposed in Ward (2003a). Juvenile primaries are lost in the second year. After moulting, birds attain full adult plumage (Table 1). More ringing data will further refine the model. Research is also needed into age related changes in other feather tracts, e.g. the wing coverts.

### Acknowledgements

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### References

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- Ward, V.L. 2003a. Partial post-juvenile moult in Cape Siskins *Pseudochloroptila totta*. Afring News 32: 36-37.
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**Figure 1.** Primary moult scores versus date for Cape Siskins *Crithagra totta* in the SAFRING database.

**Table 1.** Primary and body moult in Cape Siskins transitioning from juveniles to adults, based on observations in the Cederberg Wilderness area between 1997 and 2003. Question marks indicate months with suspected moult.

Feather tract	Breeding season <sup>1</sup>			Juvenile						Immature/transitional adult									Full Adult			
	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A
Primaries															?	?	x	x	x			
Body							x	x	x										x		x	x

<sup>1</sup> The breeding season in other parts of the Western Cape can start as early as August (Ward 2003b, references within)