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UNUSUAL VENT COLOURATION IN A DARK-CAPPED BULBUL *PYCNONOTUS TRICOLOR*

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On 17 August 2013, I caught and ringed (BE28678) a Dark-capped Bulbul at Foothold, the Johannesburg Hiking Club camping site (25° 50' 41.5"S 27° 19' 6.4"E). It was an adult bird.

What was strikingly different about this bird was the colouration of its vent feathers (Figure 1). The shaft streaks (i.e. both the shafts and bases of the barbs) on all of the vent feathers were clearly white whilst the rest of the barbs were the usual bright yellow. Of 44 individuals caught and ringed at Foothold, this individual was the only one (2.3% occurrence rate) with this unusual vent colour.

None of the field identification books or internet references pertaining to any of the *Pycnonotus* species make any reference to the vent colouration observed in this individual. Whilst Roberts 7 also makes no mention of this unusual vent colouration in the three southern African *Pycnonotus* species, the recorded hybridisation between these three species has not referred to any changes in vent colouration either (Lloyd 2005). This unusual vent colouration is also not linked to any subspecies or race, since the descriptions pertaining to *P. n. nigricans* and *P. n. superior* (African Red-eyed Bulbul) and *P. t. tricolor* and *P. t. layardi* do not refer to any changes from the normal bright yellow vent (Chittenden et al. 2012).

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank the Chairman of the Johannesburg Hiking Club for granting permission to catch and ring birds on their Foothold property.

References

- Chittenden H, Allan D and Weiersbye I 2012. In Roberts – Geographic variation of southern African Birds, WRJ Dean (Ed.) The Trustees of the John Voelcker Bird Book Fund, Cape Town, p. 153
- Lloyd P 2005 Dark-capped Bulbul. In Roberts – Birds of Southern Africa, 7th Edition, Hockey PAR, Dean WRJ, Ryan PG (Eds.) The Trustees of the John Voelcker Bird Book Fund, Cape Town, p. 766

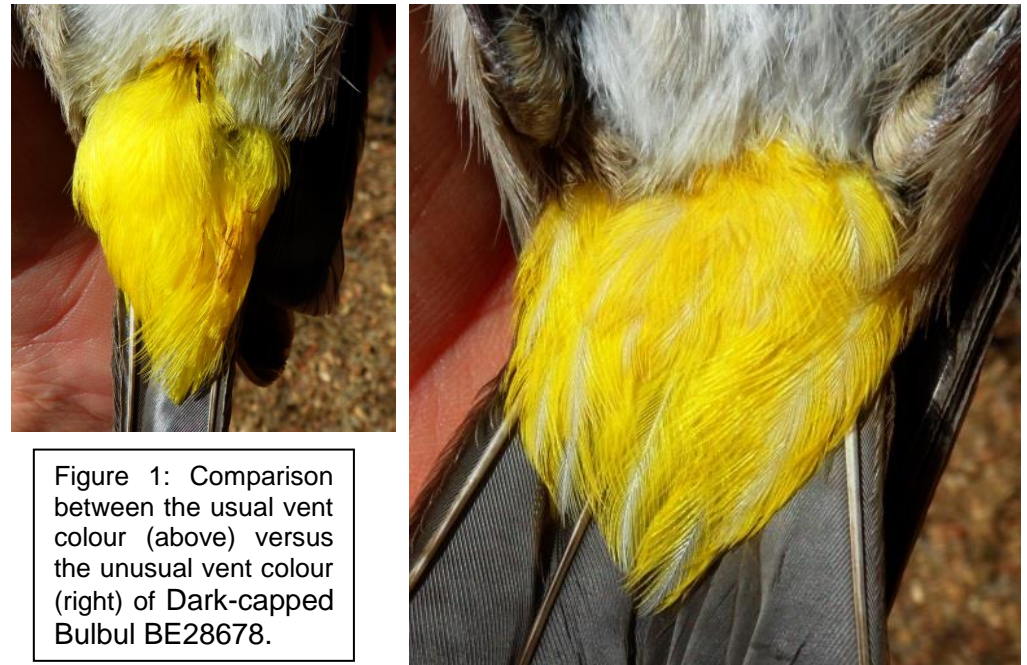


Figure 1: Comparison between the usual vent colour (above) versus the unusual vent colour (right) of Dark-capped Bulbul BE28678.