

The ring number was AA 1958 - but perhaps the last digit was obscured or worn off.

The sparrow was found in my husband's studio eating dog cubes. It had no tail feathers and seemed unable to fly. We put it in the garden where unfortunately the dog pounced on it and injured it. We put it in a cage but it died a few hours later. We informed Pretoria Zoo but they did not tell us to keep the ring. So my small daughters gave it a ceremonial funeral with the ring still intact. I have been trying to sift through the soil where it was buried to recover the ring but unsuccessfully I'm afraid. I'm sorry about this but in future we will know what to do.

Yours sincerely,

MARLENE MORRIS

#### AN EXILED WEAVER

In February 1981 SAFRING received, via Pretoria Zoo, an air letter from an address in Holland, containing a flattened ring, number 2-67582. According to the records, this ring was affixed to a male Masked Weaver *Ploceus velatus* at Bird Haven, Melrose, Johannesburg, by Messrs. Hewitt and Piper.

The letter, handwritten in Dutch, reported that the bird had been killed by a cat, and the writer (whose signature was illegible) thought the Zoo would like to know how far the bird had travelled! A letter from SAFRING acknowledging receipt of the ring and requesting more information has never been answered.

The whole thing could be an elaborate hoax, but in order to perpetrate it somebody must have taken the ring with them to Holland and posted it there. Alternatively, this Masked Weaver could have been a victim of the illegal traffic in wild birds, in which case it undoubtedly travelled to Europe in a crate in the freight compartment of a jet airliner, and this could have happened any time in the last several years. Presumably it escaped from captivity early this year, only to fall prey to a domestic cat.

Irrespective of how it got to Holland (if it did), it would appear that this bird lived for 99 months after being ringed and died in the town of Heemstede, 11 kilometres from Schipol International Airport and 9 020km from Johannesburg.

SNAKE EATS SNAKE EAGLE?

One of the more interesting recoveries in 1981 came by way of the following letter from Zaire:

Petit Seminaire,  
B.P. 5 KABINDA,  
Kasai Oriental,  
Republique du ZAIRE.

Dear Sirs,

I am pleased to advise you that I found one of your birds a vulture, I suppose - in this country.

I am Belgian and I came here four months ago to teach English. The school where I'm living is 7 km from the little town Kabinda. I've always been interested in the flora and the fauna of the