

REPORTS

REPORT ON SAOS-ADU MOULT CARD SCHEME

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This is the third update on the status of the Moulting Card Scheme organised jointly by the Southern African Ornithological Society (which has the cards printed) and the Avian Demography Unit (ADU) where the cards are issued, received and curated.

Previous updates on the scheme were given in 1987 (*Safring News* 16: 2) and 1990 (*Safring News* 19: 39-41). On 31.05.87 there were 2 499 cards for a total of 273 species. By 30.06.90 there were 4 040 cards for 380 species. This report concerns the status of the scheme at 30.06.93 when the card total had reached 9 666 and the species total 432. Table 1 shows that although two thirds of the species have less than 10 cards (108 species have only one card each), increasing numbers of species are more comprehensively represented.

Table 2 lists the species with 3-figure card totals.

Major contributions over the last three years have been George Underhill, Mike and Liz Fraser and Roy Earle, with back-dated cards completed from old field sheets/notebooks, all of ringed birds. Richard Brooke is the most frequent contributor with cards submitted from road casualties and beached birds. Kobie Raijmakers and Dawie de Swardt have also made substantial contributions, whilst other ringers' submissions have all contributed to the commendable increase in both the total of cards and number of species represented. It is desirable that cards be submitted from as many localities within a species range as possible, so ringers should not ignore, for example, the Malachite Sunbird simply because it currently heads the list for the species with the most cards; nearly all cards for this widespread species have been submitted from the southwestern Cape.

TABLE 1. Numbers of moulting cards per species

No. cards per species	Number of species with this many cards			
	June 1990	Percentage	June 1993	Percentage
1-9	286	75.3	292	67.6
10-49	79	20.8	93	21.5
50-99	11	3.9	30	7.0
>99	4	1.0	17	3.9
Totals	380	100.0	432	100.0

There are other species, regularly handled by ringers as free-flying birds, for which the collection contains surprisingly few cards or none at all. Table 3 lists 20 of these and may contain surprises for some. Catching circumstances and handling risks (to handlers) can singly or in combination, leave ringers with little time or

inclination to take moult scores and these factors could be responsible for the presence of some species in this table. It is also possible that some species are so common, or held in such low esteem by ringers as to be thought undeserving of more attention than is needed to fit rings to legs. One hopes that this is not the case.

TABLE 2. Species with 100 or more moult cards

Species		No. of cards
Malachite Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia famosa</i>	758
Cape Sugarbird	<i>Promerops cafer</i>	592
Laughing Dove	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	439
Lesser Doublecollared Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia chalybea</i>	344
Cape White-eye	<i>Zosterops pallidus</i>	334
Redheaded Finch	<i>Amadina erythrocephala</i>	265
Brownthroated Martin	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>	251
Cape Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus capensis</i>	223
Olive Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia olivacea</i>	197
Speckled Mousebird	<i>Colius striatus</i>	184
Cape Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax capensis</i>	146
Yellownosed Albatross	<i>Diomedea chlororhynchos</i>	145
Bluebilled Firefinch	<i>Lagonosticta rubricata</i>	131
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	125
European Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	118
Cape Weaver	<i>Ploceus capensis</i>	117
Bronze Mannikin	<i>Spermestes cucullatus</i>	117

TABLE 3. Species commonly ringed in 1991-1992 with few or no cards

Species	Total (full grown) ringed 1991-1992	Total moult cards
Yellow Wagtail	372	0
African Marsh Warbler	354	5
Ruff	317	9
Paradise Whydah	268	0
Cape Reed Warbler	242	5
Little Stint	222	6
Redbilled Quelea	209	0
South African Cliff Swallow	194	0
Redcollared Widow	177	2
Jameson's firefinch	152	4
Miombo Doublecollared Sunbird	130	3
Larklike Bunting	128	4
Whitebacked Vulture	121	0
Scalyfeathered Finch	117	3
Chestnut vented Titbabbler	114	5
Streakyheaded Seedeater	112	6
Thickbilled Weaver	95	0
Blackchested Prinia	92	5
Whitebrowed Sparrow Weaver	91	9
Scarletchested Sunbird	85	7
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The Avian Demography Unit now has the card totals for each species computerised and from July 1993 it will be possible to compile annual totals of cards submitted.

It is also pleasing to be able to report that good use is being made of the cards. Species for which moult details have been published since the last report include:

European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* (Cooper & Underhill 1991. *Ostrich* 62: 1-7).

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* (Underhill *et al.* 1992. *Ibis* 134: 286-297) [see review on p. 38].

Gurney's Sugarbird *Promerops gurneyi* (De Swardt 1992. *Ostrich* 63: 13-20).

Redheaded Finch *Amadina erythrocephala* (Raijmakers 1992. *Safring News* 21: 3-6).

Redwinged Starling *Onychognathus morio* (Oatley & Fraser 1992. *Safring News* 21: 43-49).

Any ringer who wishes to have access to moult cards for any species should contact the Project Coordinator of SAFRING. There are now useful computer programs specifically designed for moult analysis and the staff of the Avian Demography Unit are ready to assist any ringers who wish to analyse moult data for any species.

SPECIES																	RINGER NUMBER						RING NUMBER													
																	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17					
LOCALITY																	DISTRICT				COUNTRY				LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		ALTITUDE (METRES)							
																	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26											
DAY	MONTH	YEAR		AGE	SEX	WING			WEIGHT		TIME	RECAP	ORIGINAL RINGING DETAILS																							
27	28	29	30	19	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	DAY	MONTH	YEAR	AGE	SEX															
																	TERTIALS AND SECONDARIES										PRIMARIES									
BODY																		43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61
																		9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
LEFT				HALF TAIL				RIGHT				HALF TAIL				START OF ALTER NATIVE CODE		MOULT SCALES																		
																43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50													
BILL		TARSUS		SPARE BOXES				OFF		END OF ALTER NATIVE CODE		Greater Coes		B.W.		SMALL FEATHERS																				
51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76											
SPARE BOXES				GREATER COVERTS MOULTING OR ARRESTED										LARP		CODE		LESSER & MIDDLE COVERTS MOULTING OR ARRESTED																		
OFFICIAL				GREATER COVERTS APPEAR ALL				APPEARS ALL				BASTARD WING		MOULTING OR ARRESTED		OBSERVER																				
				NEW OLD				NEW OLD				L		H																						
PTO Notes																																				