

BIRD-IN-THE-HAND

SOME NOTES ON THE CAPE FULBUL *Pycnonotus capensis*

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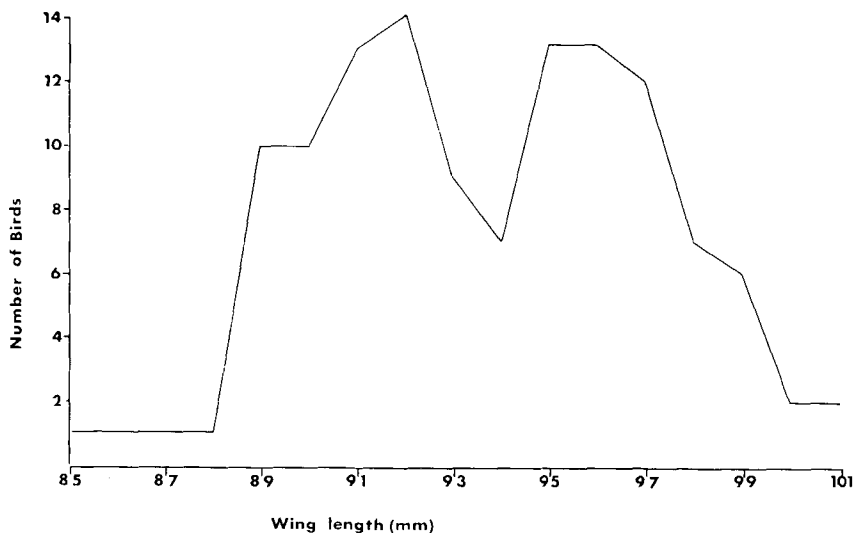
I found that, in the South West Cape during the dry months of February/March, one can catch large numbers of Cape Fulbuls in the coastal macchia by mist-netting at a water source. That these birds had converged from a large area is shown by the low retrap rate and that the excretions of the birds contained seeds not present at the ringing site. The following measurements were all made at the same site by the author during February and March 1973. In addition I have included some moult data kindly made available by Les Underhill.

1) Wing-length and sex determination. Whereas Roberts gives a good sample of wing-lengths for sexed specimens of the closely related *P. barbatus* and *P. nigricans*, the only such information available for *P. capensis* is from Lawson (1962):

7 ♂♂ (94-96-98.5), 6 ♀♀ (90-91-92)

Wing-lengths, taken by maximum chord in the natural position, are available for 122 full-grown birds:

85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101
1	1	1	1	10	10	13	14	9	7	13	13	12	7	6	2	2



Wing-length variation in the Cape Bulbul

These data are shown graphically above and it can be seen that the graph has a bimodal shape (i.e. two peaks). It can be assumed that wing-length measurements will vary randomly about the mean and that the graph represents two normal distributions for male and

female wing-lengths overlapping one another. Drawing by eye, the best normal distribution curves we may tentatively give the extreme ranges as

♂ (91-96-101), ♀ (86-91-96)

A measurement of 94 or more will give an approximately 90% chance that the bird is a male, and 93 or less a similar chance that it is a female. This implies an even sex ratio, which would be expected for this species. These figures must be used with caution for sexing moulted birds, and it would appear that prior to moulting the wing may be shorter by as much as 5%.

2) Ageing Livensidge (1972) states that a flesh-coloured wattle indicates a juvenile bird. Since the proportion of birds which show such a wattle is very small this character must disappear shortly after fledging. The size of the wattle varies considerably (6.4mm to 10.7mm) but it is not yet clear whether this difference is due to age or to sex or both. This would be worth further investigation.

3) Moult The moult, which follows breeding, takes possibly three months. The primary moult is regular with, on average 1.5 primaries per wing in growth at any one time. The secondary moult begins at about P (3). The tail moult is very rapid.

Proportion of birds with active primary moult:

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
	1/11	5/0	0/0	3/7	5/13	25/77	4/46	0/3

There is insufficient data to examine the weights in detail:

(31-35-43) gm (117)

This is rather a premature account, as I shall be unable to continue this project in England. I shall be pleased to give the original data to anyone who wishes to make use of it.

References:

- Lawson, W.J. (1962) The genus Dycanotus in southern Africa. Durban Museum Novitat 6:165-180.
- Livensidge, R. (1972) The ecological life history of the Cape Bulbul Ph.D. thesis: Univ. of Cape Town.

SOME NOTES ON THE AGEING OF LAUGHING DOVES - Stigmatopelia senegalensis

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The following observations were made on a semi-rural population of Laughing Doves in the Transvaal, and a small number of aviary controls of known age obtained from the Johannesburg S.P.C.A.. As this study has thus far only involved about 1 000 birds, and extended over a period of less than eighteen months, inferences drawn are not necessarily the conclusions that will be arrived at when the study is complete, but rather, an aid to ringers engaged in more general ringing studies and finding from time to time Laughing Doves of unknown age in their catches.