

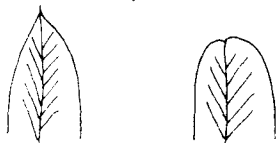
## AGEING AND SEXING THRUSHES

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In the last SAFRING, information is requested on ageing and sexing Turdus spp, particularly Turdus olivaceus. Whilst I have not worked directly with this species, I think they will probably show the same trends as the robins do, and this being the case, one should be able to segregate the sexes reasonable accurately on the basis on mensural data i.e. wing length, tail length, and weight. The males are usually larger, and once one has measured a reasonable number the ♂ - ♀ ranges will become apparent. Tail length is particularly diagnostic. In the breeding season cloacal examination is very effective (Disney, 1967). I went out with some Australian bird banders and saw this method being practised with great efficiency and good result. In the non-breeding season one needs to be well experienced to sex the smaller species in this way, but once the males begin to store sperm, it is a "piece of cake". With experience though, one should be able to sex a bird as large as a thrush at any time of the year.

Regarding the ageing, it is easy to tell 1st year Cossyphas by their rectrices, although the plumage is otherwise 'adult'. I suspect this feature is more widespread amongst certain passerine families, and think it may certainly be applicable to Turdus species.

In the first year bird the tips of the tail feathers are pointed thus



whereas in the adult (15 months+) they are rounded

In non-passerines, the converse often holds true, as in swifts incidentally, 1st year birds are rather more difficult to sex on mensural data, but one can still get an idea of what one is likely to be dealing with.

### References

DISNEY, H.J. de S 1967. Sexing passerines by cloaca examination.  
Australian Bird Bander 5(2):36-37

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