

UPDATE ON S.A.O.S. MOULT CARD SCHEME

When last reported on (Safring News 16: 2 1987), the Moulting Card Scheme, which is jointly organised by the Southern African Ornithological Society and SAFRING, boasted a total of 2 499 cards covering 273 species, of which 138 were non-passerines. That was the status of the card collection at the end of May 1987.

By the end of December 1989 all cards received had been sorted and filed in SAFRING's species code (old Roberts no.) order, and the collection contained 3 894 cards covering 366 species. By June 30 1990, there were 4 040 cards for 380 species.

For 75% of species there are less than 10 cards (Table 1). There are 15 species with 50 or more cards (Table 2 overleaf). A substantial number of cards have been compiled from examination of museum skins, road kills and beached birds. Most of these have been contributed by Richard Brooke and make up over half of the collection. From ringed birds Alec Manson has contributed over 800 cards, and Chris Hines and Dawie de Swardt have also each submitted a few hundred cards. Every contribution is valuable and thanks are due to all those that have taken time to fill in moulting cards from their records.

TABLE 1

NUMBER OF MOULT CARDS PER SPECIES

NUMBER OF CARDS	NUMBER OF SPECIES
1-9	286
10-49	79
50-99	11
100-499	4

TABLE 2

SPECIES WITH 50 OR MORE CARDS

SPECIES	NUMBER OF CARDS
CAPE CORMORANT	145
SUBANTARCTIC SKUA	83
LAUGHING DOVE	97
EUROPEAN SWIFT	55
AFRICAN SWIFT	58
LITTLE SWIFT	64
AFRICAN PALM SWIFT	72
EUROPEAN SWALLOW	72
GURNEY'S SUGARBIRD	50
YELLOW-BELLIED SUNBIRD	81
OLIVE SUNBIRD	193
CAPE SPARROW	70
CAPE WEAVER	58
BLUE-BILLED FIREFINCH	110
COMMON WAXBILL	68

TABLE 3

SPECIES GROUPS WITH FEW OR NO CARDS

SPECIES GROUP	NUMBER OF CARDS
VULTURES	0
CRANES	0
COURSERS	2
PARROTS	0
LOURIES	1
ROLLERS	1
HOOPOES AND WOODHOOPES	2
HORNBILLS	2
WOODPECKERS	4
LARKS	18
CROWS	0
TITS	0
THRUSHES AND ROCK THRUSHES	7
CHATS AND WHEATEARS	8
PIPITS	2
LONGCLAWS	0

The inflow of cards from ringers has dwindled somewhat so perhaps this report will rekindle awareness of the scheme. Table 3 shows the groups for which there are few or no cards. Many comprise species which are seldom caught by ringers, but there are some unexpected groups like tits and thrushes which seem to have largely escaped the attention of moult scrutineers.

Moult cards are available, free of charge, from SAFRING.

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