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## BIRDS RINGED AND RECAPTURED AT KALKWAL, FREE STATE

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Bird ringing projects in and around Bloemfontein form part of the activities of BirdLife Free State. Ringing activities through the years were mainly concentrated at the Free State National Botanical Gardens at the outskirts of the city, the Oliewenhuis Art Museum area in the city, and at Bishop's Glen 20 kilometers north-east of Bloemfontein (see de Swardt 1995a & b, de Swardt et al. 2004, 2005). During the same time span, some bird ringing also occurred sporadically at a farm Kalkwal about 50 kilometres north of Bloemfontein on which this note reports. Ringing activities were discontinued at the site as the property was sold and the contact details of the new owner were not available.

The farm Kalkwal (28° 50' 3.83" S, 26° 11' 16.82" E) is situated on the banks of the Doringspruit drainage line which flows into the Modder River and is approximately 20 kilometres from the Florisbad / Soutpan area. The habitat is mainly *Vachellia karoo* veld with dense thickets on the banks of the Doringspruit. The stream is deeply eroded and in some high rainfall years it is in flood (Figure 1). Other dominant tree species are *Ziziphus mucronata* and karroid shrubs in open areas.

Between April 1998 and March 2012 a total of 577 birds of 54 species were ringed (Table 1). During June 2007 fieldwork was done to target shrub-robins *Cercotrichas* spp, Fiscal Flycatchers *Sigelus*

*silens* and other species with Fitzpatrick Institute researchers of University of Cape Town (Dr Penn Lloyd, Dr Jerome Fuchs and team members) and 72 birds were ringed during a three day field trip. The most frequently captured species were Southern Masked Weaver *Ploceus velatus* (79 birds), Titbabbler *Parisoma subcaruleum* (49 birds) and Black-chested Prinia *Prinia flavicans* (40 birds) (see Table 1). Interesting species captured at this locality include Natal Spurfowl *Pternistis natalensis*, Spotted Eagle-owl *Bubo africanus* (flew into line of nets when nets were already open before sunrise), Speckled Mousebird *Colius striatus* and Black-faced Waxbill *Estrilda erythronotos*. Rare birds and migrants are mostly known as a result of bird ringing. The Kalkwal site is one of the localities where Rattling Cisticolas *Cisticola chiniana* is targeted for the annual Birding Big Day teams in November, as two birds were ringed here (Figure 2). Common Whitethroats *Sylvia communis* occur along the Modder River and at the nearby Soetdoring Nature Reserve. A total of 3 birds were ringed, one on 14 February 2006 and 2 birds on 22 February 2007 (Figure 3).

A total of 44 recaptures were obtained (from 13 species) and a recapture rate of 7.6% was recorded (Table 2). The most frequently recaptured species were Cape Robin *Cossypha caffra*, Black-chested Prinia and Titbabbler. The longest time lapsed was for a Cape Robin (ring BD53404) which was ringed on 7 April 1998, recaptured on 11 August 2005 and again 113 months (9.4 years) later on 18 June 2007 (Table 2). Ten Titbabblers were recaptured, the longest time elapsed being 48 months (4 years).

The overall recapture rate obtained at Kalkwal can be compared with that obtained during ringing projects around Bloemfontein. At Bishop's Glen a recapture rate of 2.0% (of 10944 birds) was obtained by April 2005 (de Swardt et al. 2005). Currently 11470 birds have been ringed and 230 recaptured (unpub. data). The Free State National Botanical Gardens yielded a recapture rate of 9.95% (of 1311 birds; April 2004) and the Oliewenhuis gardens a recapture rate of 7.13% (of 729 birds; November 1994) (de Swardt 1995b, de

Swardt et al. 2004, 2005). The recapture rate obtained at Kalkwal falls within those obtained at the other ringing sites around Bloemfontein. The value of revisiting ringing sites mainly annually to obtain recapture data is again illustrated in this article.

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Figure 1: The Kalkwal bird ringing site near the Morrerriervn Florisbad / Soutpan area. The Doringspruit was in flood after high rainfall in February 2004.



Figure 2 (left): Rattling Cisticola captured and ringed at Kalkwal on 10 December 1999. They prefer the more open thornveld areas near the Doringspruit.

Figure 3 (right): A total of 3 Whitethroats were ringed at this locality. This bird was ringed on 22 February 2007. Note its white outer tail feather and brownish secondary feather edges.

**Table 1.** Bird species ringed at Kalkwal, April 1998 to March 2012.

Sp. No.	Species	Ringed	Retraps	Rate
183	Natal Francolin	1		
242	Crowned Plover	1		
314	Red-eyed Dove	2		
316	Cape Turtle Dove	11		
317	Laughing Dove	31		
318	Namaqua Dove	3		
348	Jacobin Cuckoo	1		
352	Didric Cuckoo	7		
368	Spotted Eagle Owl	1		
390	Speckled Mousebird	1		
391	White-backed Mousebird	19		
392	Red-faced Mousebird	8		
397	Malachite Kingfisher	3		
402	Brown-hooded Kingfisher	4	2	50
409	White-fronted Bee-eater	2		
420	African Hoopoe	1		
421	Scimitar-billed Hoopoe	3	1	33.3
432	Acacia Pied Barbet	27	3	11.1
439	Crested Barbet	7	1	14.2
442	Lesser Honeyguide	3		
450	Cardinal Woodpecker	1		
460	Sabota Lark	4		
514	Ashy Tit	6		
575	Ant-eating Chat	3		
581	Cape Robin	26	12	46.1
583	Karoo Robin	13	1	7.7
586	Kalahari Robin	34		
594	Whitethroat	3		

Sp. No.	Species	Ringed	Retraps	Rate
596	Icterine Warbler	1		
599	Willow Warbler	1		
621	Long-billed Crombec	2		
637	Neddicky	22	2	10
642	Rattling Cisticola	2		
650	Black-chested Prinia	40	7	17.5
658	Titbabbler	49	10	20.4
665	Fiscal Flycatcher	20	2	10
674	Pirit Batis	5		
678	Fairy Flycatcher	1		
692	Grassveld Pipit	3		
707	Common Fiscal	12		
708	Red-backed Shrike	4		
714	Three-streaked Tchagra	10	1	10
722	Bokmakierie	2		
780	White-browed Sparrow-weaver	4		
786	Cape Sparrow	6		
787	Southern Grey-headed Sparrow	2		
789	Scaly-feathered Finch	30		
803	Southern Masked Weaver	79	1	1.2
805	Red-billed Quelea	22		
840	Violet-eared Waxbill	4	1	25
841	Black-cheeked Waxbill	1		
866	Yellow Canary	6		
1104	Karoo Thrush	9		
1171	Orange River White-eye	14		
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>577</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>7.6</b>



**Table 2.** Recaptures obtained at Kalkwal, Brandfort between April 1998 and March 2012, with months elapsed between ringing and recapture.

Ring	Species	Ring date	Retrap date	Months
BD53404	Cape Robin-chat	07/04/1998	18/06/2007	113
AP00956	Titbabbler	19/06/2007	21/06/2011	48
GA85825	Titbabbler	22/07/2004	19/06/2007	35
GA85826	Titbabbler	22/07/2004	05/06/2007	34
FA43803	Fiscal Flycatcher	22/07/2004	18/06/2007	34
BD81213	Cape Robin-chat Black-chested	22/07/2004	22/06/2006	23
AM13234	Prinia Brown-hooded	11/08/2005	06/05/2007	21
4A35346	Kingfisher	30/11/2005	19/06/2007	19
BD81214	Cape Robin-chat Three-streaked	23/07/2004	21/02/2006	19
BC99438	Tchagra	22/07/2004	20/02/2006	19
AM13495	Titbabbler	14/02/2006	19/06/2007	17
4A15897	Chrested barbet Black-chested	23/07/2004	30/11/2005	16
GA85831	Prinia Black-chested	23/07/2004	30/11/2005	16
AM13501	Prinia Black-chested	22/02/2007	21/02/2006	12
GA85822	Prinia	22/07/2004	11/08/2005	12
AM13559	Titbabbler Southern Red	21/06/2006	19/06/2007	12
AM13585	Bishop	22/06/2006	19/06/2007	12

Ring	Species	Ring date	Retrap date	Months
BH64030	Acacia Pied Barbet	25/06/2007	12/04/2008	7
AM13238	Neddicky	11/08/2005	13/02/2006	7
4A35303	Acacia Pied Barbet	02/12/2005	22/06/2006	6
AM13614	Neddicky	22/02/2007	25/08/2007	6
CV10098	Cape Robin-chat Black-chested	21/02/2006	07/05/2006	4
GA85833	Prinia	23/07/2004	09/12/2004	4
AM13606	Titbabbler Brown-hooded	22/02/2007	06/06/2007	4
4A35345	Kingfisher Scimitar-billed	30/11/2005	20/02/2006	3
4A35347	Wood-hoopoe	30/11/2005	13/02/2006	2
CC63553	Acacia Pied Barbet	22/04/2006	22/06/2006	2
AM13498	Titbabbler	20/02/2006	22/04/2006	2
FA43862	Karoo Robin	06/06/2007	19/06/2007	1