

DATA EXCHANGE

This section has been included in the Journal at the request of a number of members of the Association. It is designed to allow the inclusion of material of a brief and possible preliminary nature with a very short publication time. Suitable subject matter would include Weights and Measurements, Molt, Plumage changes, Colour of soft parts, Ageing and Sexing methods and Requests for information, etc.

It must be emphasized that material in 'Data Exchange' will, in some cases, be of a preliminary and possibly of an unconfirmed nature. It is included to assist workers in the field and also for trial and/or comment by others. All

correspondence in respect to material published in this section should be directed, in the first instance, to the quoted author.

Members are invited to submit brief papers or notes for inclusion in 'Data Exchange', such material should be forwarded to the Hon. Editor for appraisal.

It is recommended that material from 'Data Exchange' be referenced as, e.g.:

Lane, S. G. (1983). 'Weights and Measurements — Eastern Spinebill', *In Data Exchange, Corella* 7: 22.

Hon. Editor

COLOUR DIFFERENCE IN RED-BROWED FIRETAIL

On 23 February, 1990 at 8.00 a.m. (Central Standard Daylight Savings time), I mist-netted three Red-browed Firetails *Emblema temporalis*. One of the birds had a significant colour difference in that the beak, brow and rump feathers were all bright orange, and not red. Before releasing the bird (a condition of my trapping permit), I removed several feathers with the orange colour from the bird's rump, and took several colour photographs of the bird with and without another firetail which had normal colouration. I applied band no 024-38137 to the bird.

The colour selected to most closely resemble the plumage and bill colour of the finch was Chrome Orange (colour 16) of the Naturalist's Colour Guide (Smithe 1975). This colour was described by a Munsell notation as follows: 2.5 YR 6.0/16.0. The first fractional figure describes the hue in its relationship to yellow as against red. That is, on a scale from red to yellow, this colour was one-quarter the distance from yellow to red. This is important as it indicates the proximity of the colour being much more yellow than to red which is the usual colour of the species.

The figure 6.0 refers to a scale from darkness to lightness on a scale of 1 to 10, so that this colour was in the medium range rather than distinctly dark or light.

The final figure of 16.00 shows the chroma, which is the degree of intensity of the hue. A weak colour is indicated by a low number, so the colour was intense and highly saturated.

The Munsell notation for Chrome Orange of 2.5 YR 6.5/16.0 thus represents a colour of a yellowish-reddish hue, neither dark nor light in value, with a strong high intensity or chromaticity. A colour swatch was used to first identify the colour, number and name.

Dr Philippa Horton, South Australian Museum (pers. comm.) advises that there are three specimens of this species with orange colouring, held in the museum collection. Two of those died in captivity, probably aviary bred birds and the

third came from Pine Island, ACT. A fourth specimen from Chain of Ponds in the Adelaide Hills has an intermediate orange-red colour.

Derek Goodwin (1982) reports that finches bred in captivity often replace red plumage with some shade of pale yellow, dull gold or pale pinkish when they moult. He points out also that this phenomenon is less marked in the estrildids than in finches or weavers. The bird I encountered, however, had a strong orange colour and that colour was as marked on its beak as it was in its plumage. Goodwin also points out that in captivity, sufficient warmth seems the major factor necessary to enable retention of normal colouring. He sights an example of a captive moulting into shining red plumage when kept at a temperature of about 40°C but at one moult, when the bird was kept at only 30°C, the new plumage was yellowish.

Klaus Immelmann (1982) reports that in the wild mutant Red-browed Firetails may be seen in which the crimson feathers are replaced by golden-yellow plumage. He does not make any reference to golden beaks.

Although the references cited suggest that climatic conditions and perhaps diet, are the possible causes of the alteration to plumage colour following moult, it would seem unusual for only one apparently healthy bird in a flock to experience this change. My supposition is that it is a genetic condition.

Should anyone recapture this bird would they carefully note the plumage colouration.

References

- Goodwin, D. (1982) 'Estrildid Finches of the World' (Oxford University Press: Oxford.)
 Immelmann, K. (1982) 'Australian Finches in Bush and Aviary' (Angus and Robertson: Sydney.)
 Smithe, F. B. (1975) 'The Naturalist's Colour Guide' (American Museum of Natural History: New York.)

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MORPHOMETRICS OF THE WHITE-FACED ROBIN

In November 1990, the Australian Bird Study Association organized a campout for bird banders to establish a co-operative bird banding station at Iron Range National Park, Cape Yorke, Queensland. The birds of this remote region have rarely been studied and little information has been published.

The Australian subspecies of the White-faced Robin *Tregelasia leucops albigularis* was among the birds most commonly caught and banded during the course of the week-long campout, and 186 individuals were captured in mist-nets scattered throughout approximately 50 hectares of tropical lowland rainforest. Of these, 65 were recorded as adult birds in breeding condition and positively sexed by cloacal examination (40 male and 25 female). Their weights and measurements are recorded in the following table.

It appears, from this small sample, that adult White-faced Robins can be sexed on wing span and wing length measurements. Birds with a wingspan and wing length greater than 239 mm and 79 mm respectively will be male. Those with wingspan and wing length of less than 232 mm and 74 mm respectively will be female. Additional data will be required to confirm that an overlap does not exist in the wingspan measurement and that there is an overlap between the sexes in wing length measurements.

	Sex	No.	Range	Mean	SD
Weight (g)	M	37	13.0–18.3	15.9	1.1
	F	21	12.5–17.3	13.8	1.3
Head/Bill (mm)	M	24	32.8–36.1	35.1	0.8
	F	19	32.1–34.2	33.0	0.5
Wing Span (mm)	M	34	235–253	244.2	5.2
	F	22	214–234	227.2	4.9
Wing Length (mm)	M	40	74–82	78.6	1.9
	F	25	69–76	72.2	1.6
Tail Length (mm)	M	35	47–54	50.3	1.4
	F	22	44–54	46.7	1.9
Total Length (mm)	M	7	133–145	139.0	3.4
	F	4	128–142	134.5	5.0
Tarsus Length (mm)	M	8	19.0–21.5	20.5	0.9
	F	3	18.8–20.2	19.5	0.6

We acknowledge the contribution made by the 18 banders who participated in the campout and the co-operation and assistance provided by the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme.

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RECOVERY ROUND-UP

This section is prepared with the co-operation of the Secretary, Australian Bird and Bat Banding Schemes, Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service. The recoveries are only a selection of the thousands received each year; they are not a complete list and should not be analysed in full or part without prior consent of the banders concerned. Longevity and distance records refer to the ABBBS unless otherwise stated. The distance is the shortest distance in kilometres along the direct line joining the place of banding and recovery; the compass direction refers to the same direct line. (There is no implication regarding the distance flown or the route followed by the bird). Where available ABBBS age codes have been included in the banding data.

Recovery or longevity items may be submitted directly to me whereupon their merits for inclusion will be considered.

Hon. Editor.

Cattle Egret *Ardeola ibis*

- (a) 100–71950. Nestling banded by D. J. Geering at Lawrence, NSW on 5 Jan. 89. Colour marking sighted in field (band number inferred) at: (1) Bairnsdale, Vic., from 1 June 89 to 17 Aug. 89. 1 051 km SW. (2) banding site on 27 Dec. 89. (3) Bairnsdale, Vic. from 18 June 90 to 26 Aug. 90. 1 051 km SW. (4) various locations in Clarence valley,

near banding site, from 4 Dec. 90 to 16 Dec. 90. (5) Bairnsdale, Vic. on 24 May 91. 1 051 km SW. (6) in Clarence valley, near banding site on 9 Mar. 92.

- (b) 100–71975. Nestling banded by D. J. Geering at Lawrence, NSW on 5 Jan. 89. Colour marking sighted in field (band number inferred) at: (1) near banding site on 24 Mar. 89. (2) Edithvale, Vic. on 28 Aug. 89. 1 201 km SW. (3) various locations in Clarence valley, including banding site, from 27 Dec. 89 to 16 Apr. 90. (4) Portland, Vic. on 6 July 90. 1 445 km SW.
- (c) 100–73011. Nestling banded by D. J. Geering at Junction Hill near Grafton, NSW on 13 Jan. 90. Colour marking sighted in field (band number inferred) at: (1) Seaham, NSW on 30 Nov. 90. 354 km SSW. (2) various locations in Clarence valley, including banding site, from 27 Dec. 90 to 21 Feb. 91. (3) Shoalhaven Heads, NSW on 10 Nov. 91. (4) Seaham, NSW on 13 Nov. 91. 354 km SSW. (5) banding site on 3 Dec. 91.

Great Egret *Egretta alba*

- 110–60313. Nestling banded by D. J. Geering at Lawrence, NSW on 26 Dec. 89. Colour marking sighted in field (band number inferred) at: (1) on ninety occasions at Wards River, near Gloucester, NSW from 12 May 90 to 20 Oct. 90. (2) on twenty occasions at Seaham, NSW from 5 Nov. 90 to 31 Dec. 90. 374 km S.