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Received 21 May 1993

Revised 24 August 1993

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A long-lived Common Bulbul *Pycnonotus barbatus* in Nigeria

Keith *et al.* (1992) quote an 18 year-old individual from Chad as the longest-lived Common Bulbul *Pycnonotus barbatus* in the wild. As this record has not been published, details ought to be put on record.

The bird concerned was ringed (British Trust for Ornithology ring no. CR40257) at Mallamfatori, Lake Chad (Nigeria) (13°37'N, 13°20'E) on 27 August 1968 and retrapped on 27 September. It was recaptured and released on 4 February 1987 (information kindly supplied by the B.T.O.). It was half way through active primary moult in August and September 1968, and was most probably already adult (juvenile birds had only a partial moult at that time). This species breeds in the area mainly from March to May (pers. obs.), before the rains. This would mean that it hatched in the first half of 1967 or earlier, and was 19 years old when recaptured. From its wing length (101 mm) it was probably a male: the range for 38 non-juveniles (March-May) was 93-104 mm (mean 96.6), and the species shows fairly well-marked sexual dimorphism in size (Britton 1972; pers. obs.).

The locality of the 1987 recapture was reported as Maiduguri, some 193 km from where the bird was ringed, but I am sure it would in fact have been at Mallamfatori, as the person who reported it gave his address as the Lake Chad Research Institute, which has a station there (though its postal box, and hence address, is in Maiduguri).

As reported by Keith *et al.* (1992), there is an even older record for this species from a captive bird, and an increasing number of passerine species have produced comparable results in the wild. These figures need to be compared to the considerably shorter mean life expectancies quoted by these authors (1.4-2 years), but I believe the

means would be greater if ringers undertaking mark-recapture studies were to observe colour-marked birds and did not rely only on retraps (Dowsett 1985). Some individuals are very hard to recapture after the experience of being ringed. Our knowledge of longevity could also be improved if ringers made a point of revisiting sites where many resident birds have been ringed in the past. Any ringer wishing to know of such localities, in West Africa or elsewhere, could contact me for details from the *Tauraco* Afring data bank.

I thank Humphrey Crick for his helpful comments on a draft of this note.

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Received 21 May 1993

Revised 24 August 1993

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