Short communications

Longevity records of Dark Batis *Batis crypta* and Red-capped Robin-Chat *Cossypha natalensis*, in addition to recapture records of three other forest dependent species from the Udzungwa Mountains, Tanzania

Long-term netting studies using marked birds provide important longevity records, especially for poorly known African forest species (e.g., Mann 1985, Baker & Oatley 2001). Here we report primarily on recaptures of one Red-capped Robin-Chat *Cossypha natalensis* and one Dark Batis *Batis crypta* from the Kihansi Gorge, Udzungwa Mountains, Tanzania. We have sampled the forest birds in this gorge since 1998 (e.g., Cordeiro *et al.* 2004, Werema & Msuya 2019), and two of us have continued this long-term work to date, with intermittent visits every few years as summarized in Werema & Msuya (2019). Furthermore, a short pilot visit prior to this long-term work was conducted in September 1994 by MCR, who captured and ringed birds at two sites in the gorge (Rahner 1995). During this research, we recaptured single individuals of both *C. natalensis* and *B. crypta*, and we provide a summary below for all the recapture events for them.

We also provide recapture records for six other individuals of three species from this gorge (Table 1). The longevity records for these three species (*Eurillas virens, Arizelocichla masukuensis*, *Cyanomitra olivacea*) are within or lower than those reported for them elsewhere in the region (Mann 1985, Dranzoa 1997, Baker & Oatley 2001). However, we considered it important to report them in this note for those interested in such data. We follow *Birds of the World* (del Hoyo *et al.* 2021) for nomenclature.

The *C. natalensis* was an adult, ringed on 25 February 1999 (ring#: Nairobi A64613), recaptured again about two years later on 13 July 2001 at the exact same location by NJC: the Middle Kihansi at 630 m, in riverine forest that transitioned with lowland forest adjacent to the Kihansi River. CW and CAM recaptured this bird again on 12 September 2008, and for the last time on 6 March 2009 (Table 1). On both occasions the bird was captured in the vicinity of the original location, at 600–650 m. The conservative age from ringing to the last recapture is ten years and ten days.

The *B. crypta* was a male (ring#: Nairobi X98425) recaptured by CW and CAM in the Upper Kihansi at around 800–870 m on 27 November 2009 (Table 1). It was controlled by MCR on 22 September 1994, at 750 m, presumably close to where CW and CAM recaptured it. The conservative age from ringing to the last recapture is 15 years, two months and six days.

Among some of the oldest forest birds in eastern Africa is the record of Dranzoa (1997) of an 18-year-old Rufous Flycatcher-thrush *Neocossyphus fraseri* from Ziika Forest, Uganda, and the record of Plain Greenbul *Eurillas curvirostris* from Kakamega Forest, western Kenya, with a longevity estimate of 19 years and six months (Mann 1985). For the intra-African migrant, *Cossypha natalensis*, the oldest published record is that of Dranzoa (1997) of a seven-year-old individual from Ziika Forest. However, in the database of the South African Ringing Scheme, there is a record of 11 years, 11

months and 27 days (Oschadleus 2019). Our longevity records of about 10 years for this species compares to other members of this genus (Oschadleus 2019), including a Cape Robin-chat *C. caffra* of about 17 years (Paijmans *et al.* 2019) and a White-browed Robin-chat *C. heuglini* of close to 12 years (Paijmans *et al.* 2019, Oschadleus 2019). For *B. crypta*, the longevity record at Kihansi eclipses reports for congenerics, including one of a Cape Batis *B. capensis* male (ssp. *dimorpha*) from Malawi at just over 11 years (Dowsett-Lemaire 2006), and another male *B. capensis* from South Africa at 13 years, one month and nine days (Paijmans *et al.* 2019).

Table 1. Birds ringed in Kihansi Gorge, Udzungwa Mountains, in September 1994 and recaptured between June 1998 and July 2001. *controlled by NJC, **recaptured by CW & CAM with only the last recapture date shown for *Cossypha natalensis*, ***controlled by MR; ^ recaptured by NJC.

Species	Ring #	Date of ringing/elevation (m)	Recapture date/elevation (m)	Elapsed time
Cossyphya natalensis	A64613	25 February 1999/630*	6 March 2009/600-650**	10yr 0mo 6d
Batis crypta	X98429	22 September 1994/750***	27 November 2009/800-870**	15yr 2mo 6d
Eurillas virens	X98429	22 September 1994/750***	8 June 1998/800^	3yr 8mo 18d
Eurillas virens	X98695	16 September 1994/650***	4 June 1998/630^	3yr 8mo 20d
Arizelocichla masukuensis	A59706	21 September 1994/750***	23 Feb 1999/800^	4yr 5mo 3d
Cyanomitra olivacea	N92011	15 September 1994/650***	13 July 2001/630^	6yr 9mo 29d
Cyanomitra olivacea	N92037	22 September 1994/750***	23 February 1999/760^	4yr 5mo 2d
Cyanomitra olivacea	N92044	22 September 1994/750***	13 July 2001/800^	6yr 9mo 22d

Our data, while limited, add more evidence that some African passerines have the potential to live for many years (Peach *et al.* 2001). This applies to forest species, such as *C. natalensis*, that is known for its intra-African and altitudinal migratory behaviour in the Eastern Arc Mountains (Werema 2020), and elsewhere in Africa (Berruti *et al.* 1994, Oatley 2017). It also applies to *Batis* species, such as *B. crypta*, where our record is one of the oldest for the Platysteiridae family in eastern Africa.

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