



# Biodiversity Observations

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## **SECRETARYBIRD *SAGITTARUIS SERPENTARUIS* RESIGHTED AFTER 5 YEARS**

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## SECRETARYBIRD *SAGITTARIUS SERPENTARIUS* RESIGHTED AFTER 5 YEARS

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The longevity record for the Secretarybird *Sagittarius serpentarius* is 3 years and four months, with most recoveries having an elapsed time less than 7 months and juvenile mortalities are considered to be very low (Dean & Simmons 2015). This note reports on a new longevity record for this species.

Secretarybird nestlings were ringed in their nests in the Bloemfontein area since 1989 and a patagial tagging project was initiated on this species in 2009 (de Swardt 1990, 2010). The breeding season for Secretarybirds is mostly from June or July when nest building commences and the chicks stay in the nest up to 3 months (Dean Simmons 2005, pers obs). During July 2011 a nest was located in a *Ziziphus mucronata* tree with 2 nestlings already about 7 - 8 weeks old; these were ringed and patagial tagged (NM09 and NM10) on 23 July 2011 (De Swardt 2011). The year 2011 experienced high rainfall in the first part of the year which probably caused this pair to start nest building and egg laying later in the summer.

One of the nestlings (ring no. 9A54332, tag number NM09) was resighted three times (Table 1). The first resighting of this individual was on 12 March 2013 near the east gate of Willem Pretorius Game Reserve near Senekal, Free State and the distance moved was about 170 kilometres. Later, in July 2014, it was observed in the Delmas district (locality unknown), Mpumalanga and was posted on

Facebook. Recently this individual was seen at the farm Rolspruit, Kinross in Mpumalanga on 7 June 2016 (Figure 1; Table 1), which was about 40 kilometres from Delmas. It can be speculated that NM09 spend the past two years in these parts of Mpumalanga. This sighting represents a distance moved of at least 440 kilometres and a time lapse of 4 years and 11 months (5 years if age is back dated to hatching). The nestlings were ringed at an age of 7 - 8 weeks in the nest.

This resighting record represents the oldest ringed Secretarybird in SAFRING's database. Observers and birders should be on the lookout for any patagial tagged Secretarybirds, vultures and other raptors and report these to SAFRING firstly (and also the Birds of Prey Working Group, and BirdLife South Africa).

Thanks to Ian Haggerty for photographing and reporting NM09 to BirdLife South Africa.

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**Fig. 1.** Secretarybird with patagial tag number NM09 observed at Rolspruit farm, Kinross, Mpumalanga on 7 June 2016 (Photo: Ian Haggerty).

**Table 1.** Ringing and resighting details of patagial tagged Secretarybird 9A54332 (tag NM09).

Date	Location	Resight locality	Time since ringed	Distance from ring site
23/07/2011	2917S2557E	Klein Rust Plaats, Bloemfontein		
12/03/2013	2818S2722E	East gate, Willem Pretorius Reserve, Senekal	1y 7m 23d	170km
14/07/2014		Delmas area, Mpumalanga	3 y	c 450km
07/06/2016	2624S2901E	Rolspruit, Kinross	4y 10m 21d	440km

[See record with map on SAFRING web at:  
[http://safring.adu.org.za/ring\\_info.php?ring=9A54332](http://safring.adu.org.za/ring_info.php?ring=9A54332)]