

# New cases of extra secondaries in passerines

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*On 04.07.93 a second year (Euring code 5) male Citril Finch *Serinus citrinella* with an extra feather inserted under the first secondary of the left wing was trapped at La Molina (Pyrenees, Girona, NE Spain). The right wing showed the normal number of feathers. The wing formula was similar to a sample of birds of the same sex trapped at the same site. The abnormal position of insertion of the extra secondary seems therefore not to have affected the overall shape of the wing. This contrasts with another published report on the Serin *Serinus serinus*, in which the extra feather affected the wing-shape. Two additional cases, one of a Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*, and the other of a Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirius*, are also reported.*

Key words: Citril Finch, *Serinus citrinella*, additional secondary, Reed Warbler, *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*, Cirl Bunting, *Emberiza cirius*.

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Despite the reports of Stresemann (1963) and Melville (1985) on extra wing flightfeathers, the data on passerines is yet scarce (Bertolero et al. 1992, Bigas & Copete 1992, Copete et al. 1992, Fernández 1993). Reports on this anomaly are therefore still needed to quantify the extent of the phenomenon.

The Citril Finch *Serinus citrinella* presents six secondaries, and like most Palearctic passerines (Ginn & Melville 1983) it shows 19 wing flightfeathers. On 4.07.93 a second year (Euring code 5) male Citril Finch

was trapped at La Molina (Alp, Girona, 42.23 N, 01.53 E) with an extra secondary in the left wing. This feather was inserted anomalously under the first secondary, and showed a size of one third less than the rest of secondaries. The right wing showed the normal number of feathers. A Hest between the wing formula (according to Mlikovsky 1978) of the abnormal bird and a sample of 8 birds of the same sex and Euring ages 5 or 6, revealed no significant differences in the shape of the wing (indexes S and P

of Mlikovsky, and length of the first eight primaries, in all the cases  $p$  was NS). Although the effect of the small sample size cannot be discarded, this result contrasts with the report of Copete et al. (1992); in that case the wing-formula was different from that of the mean population; this could be due to the fact that the extra secondary was harmoniously placed, which probably caused an overall reorganization of the feathers in the wing. Our bird presented the extra secondary abnormally inserted, allowing a normal position for the rest of feathers and, consequently, a normal wing-formula.

These published reports, to which we should add some recently recorded cases in others species (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*, D. Bigas pers. com.; *Emberiza cirius*, D. Robson pers. com.) suggest that the presence of extra wing flight-feathers in passerines may be more extended than previously stated. A regular examination of numbers of feathers by ringers, and comparisons of wing-formulas between normal and atypical wings are necessary to clarify the rate of appearance of this phenomenon, and to ascertain to what extent the presence of additional feathers can change the wing-shapes of passerines. •

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#### RESUMEN.

*Nuevos casos de secundarias extra en passeriformes.*

El día 04.07.93, un ejemplar de segundo año calendario (código Euring 5) de Verderón serrano *Serinus citrinella* con una pluma extra insertada bajo la primera secundaria del ala izquierda, fue capturado en La Molina (Pirineo de Girona, NE de España). El ala derecha presentaba el número

habitual de plumas. La fórmula alar se comparó con las de una muestra de aves del mismo sexo capturadas en la misma zona, resultando similar a éstas, por lo que la inserción anormal de la secundaria extra no parecía afectar a la forma del ala. Este caso no coincide con otro descrito en un Verdcecillo *Serinus serinus*, en el cual la pluma extra afectó a la forma del ala. Dos casos adicionales, uno en un Carricero común *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* y otro en un Escribano Soteño *Emberiza cirius*, han sido también descritas.

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