

Now that the fact is established of a regular and considerable traffic of exulans between the breeding island of South Georgia and the N.S.W. coastal feeding area, the retrapping of birds previously banded here is providing most interest and information. Of the 102 birds so far caught, 22 have been previously banded (18 at Bellambi and 4 at Malabar). Notes on the development of plumage pattern over the years are providing data of extreme interest though the story is still far from complete. One recent retrap, 140-02713, banded at Bellambi in July 1959, has checked in on each of the three subsequent years.

* (This information has since been received: we hope to hear more about this from Doug in our next issue. - Editor)

ALBATROSS BANDING AT MALABAR

S. G. Lane, Sydney.

(Bill Lane sends us the following note on the one and only albatross banding foray/sortie which it has been possible to launch in the Malabar area during this past winter. For those readers not familiar with the albatross banding work, we should mention that, albatrosses - mostly Wandering Albatrosses (Diomedea exulans) - and Giant Petrels (Macronectes giganteus) come to feed on the refuse from the Malabar sewer outfall (one of the main Sydney sewers), and that during the winter months some hundreds of these birds may be counted from the cliff top when conditions are favourable. Advantage of this fact has been taken to extend to this area the albatross banding pioneered by Doug Gibson and Alan Sefton at Bellambi since 1956. For further details see their first and second reports in Emu, May, 1959 (page 73) and May, 1960 (page 125).)

Early on 7th July last, Fred Hersey, Clive Campion and I sailed out of Botany Bay in a 12 foot launch feeling much like Bass and Flinders must have felt in the Tom Thumb - that is until two of them became more interested in feeding fish than catching albatrosses.

Conditions were far from favourable but nearly four hours on the "high seas" resulted in a total catch of 22 Wandering Albatrosses and 4 Giant Petrels. Of these, 4 "Wanderers" and 1 Giant Petrel were already banded. Details of the "Wanderer" retraps are as follows:

140-00613	banded Malabar	9-8-58
140-02978	" Malabar	20-8-60

140-03231 banded Bellambi 28-8-59
140-03512 " Bellambi 29-7-61

The Giant Petrel was wearing an American Fish and Wildlife Service band, and I have since received official notification that it was banded on Bird Island, South Georgia (presumably as a nextling) on February 1, 1962. This is in keeping with what is already known about the movements of Giant Petrels in their first winter after leaving the nest.

BIRDS OF PREY IN MIST NETS.

Frank Stewart and John L. McKean, Melbourne.

During the time we have been using mist-nets as a technique for bird-banding, we have netted four birds of prey, viz: Boobook Owl (Ninox novaeseelandiae), Little Falcon (Falco longipennis), Brown Hawk (Falco berigora), and Collared Sparrow Hawk (Accipiter cirrocephalus).

Contrary to expectations these species did not provide the trouble we anticipated. All four lay quietly in the net on approach and we were able to extract the birds by firmly holding the legs, so that the talons could not strike at the remover, and lifting the bird out of the pocket. All but the Boobook Owl were caught in small mesh nets which probably made things easier.

Norman Favalaro at the Victorian Bird Banding Conference, December, 1961, mentioned that hawks were easier to handle if their eyes were covered. This was done with the aid of calico holding bags when handling the three hawks and proved successful. We are not volunteering this information as being new or original as falconers have been covering hawks' eyes for centuries. Calico holding bags (A. & N.Z. Bank silver coin bags) were used for holding the birds during weighing.

So don't worry about hawks in mist-nets; we believe you will not have any troubles, however, we have yet to mist-net a Wedge-tailed Eagle!