

bird was still looking after the three young, but on our next visit no trace could be found of them.

Observations indicate that large flocks appear around permanent waters in summer and autumn, particularly in dry conditions. These areas, in many cases, obviously do not support such numbers in the breeding season, and the distance travelled by some birds could be considerable. The increase in numbers after a successful breeding season in limited areas such as Phillip Island, must result in some birds leaving their natal area to feed and breed. More intensive banding and an increased recovery rate are necessary to test these theories fully.

SIX YEARS' SILVEREYE BANDING - AN ANALYSIS

J. Bradley, Sydney,

To supplement D.M. Walker's interesting observations (Bird Bander Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 26), my sister and I present our own experience of banding Silvereyes (*Zosterops lateralis*), which covers, with strikingly different results, the same period plus some 1956 birds. All birds involved were trapped in the garden of No. 46 Iluka Road, Mosman.

In 1956 we banded, with individual colours only, 30 birds, and since February 1959 we have C.S.I.R.O. banded as many Silvereyes as we have been able to catch in a pull-string trap. We also added individual colours to two more series, each of 30 birds, in 1959 and 1962. In an attempt to take reasonably representative samples, we trapped for colour-banding over the period late July to October, with one bird taken in November.

Dividing the seasons similarly to Walker :-

Summer: November, December, January, February,

Autumn: March, April, May.

Winter: June and part July,

Spring: late July, August, September, October,

we have obtained the following results:

30 BIRDS, COLOUR-BANDS ONLY, 1956 (Series A.)

<u>Season</u>	<u>No. Banded</u>	<u>No. seen during and after 1957</u>
Winter	1	1
Spring	28	25
Summer	1	1
Total:	<u>30</u>	Total: <u>27</u>

The above figures are taken from sight records of colour-bands.

We did not keep detailed records of the plumage of local-type birds in this series, but it included two interesting Tasmanian-Victorian type birds, which proved to be winter visitors.

<u>Field No.</u>	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960
A 16	present	present	present	--	present
A 17	present	present	--	--	present

Both birds were trapped simultaneously on 26.4.60, and were given C.S.I.R.O. bands. They were present for the six months April-September, 1960, but have not been seen since.

Compared with other banders, we catch few Silvereyes. An automatic trap would probably catch more than the pull-string, but would cause disturbance to our colour-banded individuals. We try to trap any birds lacking the full complement of C.S.I.R.O. and locality- or colour-bands, and in March, 1962, retrapped everything possible to compare plumages with skins made available by S.G.Lane. However, on the whole the banded birds which are present in our garden throughout the year are not retrapped unless there are unbanded birds about.

We have been watching Silvereyes critically since Allen Keast first announced his conclusions (since amply vindicated) regarding the migration of the species. We have never, over the past 6½ years, observed the irruption of large numbers of the Tasmanian-Victorian types, either in our garden, or in the 100-acre reserve adjoining it.

Plumage Descriptions of Birds Banded
(Including Series A, colours only)

Local (a)	279	all seasons
(b)	5	summer only
"Tasmanian"	13	autumn, winter, spring.
Unclassified	7	" " "
	304	Total.

Chins

Flanks

Local (a)	green greenish-yellow clear yellow	pale to medium tawny or fawn.
Local (b)	green greenish-yellow yellowish-green	grey, no trace of any other colour.

"Tasmanian"	grey	rufous, varying brightness.
	grey washed green	
	" " yellow	
	grey, patch greenish	
Unclassified	grey, washed green	moderate tawny (3 birds)
	grey	" " (1 bird)
	"	very pale fawn (1 bird)
	"	lamentably not noted (1 bird)

Of the 13 "Tasmanians" banded, no less than 6 were caught on 26.4.60. This six included the two Series A birds mentioned above.

We appear, from the above observations, and also from our very high proportion of retraps, to be off the main migration route of the birds from Tasmania. We reluctantly admit another possible explanation of our results: we both abhor early rising, are seldom up before 8 a.m., and may so miss the migrants. We propose testing this unpleasant theory next autumn, but think it unlikely to be upheld, as other banders seem to be successful up to 10 or 11 a.m.

Recoveries From Other Seasons.

<u>Year</u>	<u>First Banded Season</u>	<u>Number Banded</u>	<u>Number Recovered</u> (to end 1962)
1959	Summer	24	17
	Autumn	6	4
	Winter	27	11
	Spring	13	4
1959-60	Summer	30	14
	Autumn	38	5
	Winter	8	0
	Spring	2	0
1960-61	Summer	Banding suspended - cat in garden.	
	Autumn	8	3
	Winter	24	5
	Spring	18	3
1961-62	Summer	23	7
	Autumn	<u>17</u>	<u>3</u>
	<u>Total</u>	<u>238</u>	<u>76</u>

Percentage Recovery, 1959-62

<u>Season Banded</u>	<u>Walker</u>		<u>Bradley</u>	
Autumn and Winter	$\frac{46}{253} \times 100$	18.2%	$\frac{31}{128} \times 100$	24.2%
Spring	$\frac{8}{311} \times 100$	2.6%	$\frac{7}{33} \times 100$	21.2%
Summer	0	0	$\frac{38}{77} \times 100$	49.3%
Total Recovery	$\frac{54}{564} \times 100$	9.6%	$\frac{76}{238} \times 100$	31.9%

In compiling the above figures, birds were included only if recovered after an interval of at least one season: i.e. a bird caught in spring would not be included unless recovered as late as the following autumn. This was Walker's criterion, and gives conservative figures. For example, a bird banded 14.8.61 and retrapped 26.11.61 might safely be considered a summer resident. If such birds are included, our total recovery rises from 31.9% to 34.5%.

It is unfortunate that the neighbour's cat created a gap in our records, so that we have only two complete years:-

Birds Banded

	Summer	Autumn	Winter	Spring
1959-60	30	38	8	2
1961-62	$\frac{23}{53}$	$\frac{17}{55}$	$\frac{14}{22}$	$\frac{18}{20}$

These figures tend to confirm our impression that we do have winter visitors in fair numbers, as birds caught in the summer months include the current season's young, and this offsets the approximately equal ratios:-

Months 4:8 Birds banded 53:97

Further confirmation is given by the recovery percentages:-

Recovery, birds banded in <u>Summer</u>	49.3%
Recovery, birds banded in <u>Autumn</u> , <u>Winter</u> , <u>Spring</u>	23.6%

There are always many more birds on the feeding trays in the harder weather, but only banding results will show whether or not they come from far afield. Our most distant recovery so

far is from Clontarf, banded here in September 1959, and re-covered dead in July, 1960. The only "foreigner" we have re-trapped is the North Ryde bird recorded in The Bird Bander Vol.1.No.3 p.33.

We share Walker's impression that the "Tasmanian" birds are larger and heavier than the locals; they are also very belligerent.

Summary.

Six-and-a-half years' observation and banding of Silvereyes in our garden has revealed a very high percentage of resident birds and a high retrap rate, particularly of birds banded in summer. In autumn, winter and spring we appear to have a minor influx of birds in local plumage.

"TETHERED" MIST NETS.

I was much interested in the note on "tethered" mist nets (Bird Bander, No.4 p.70). During the past season I have used a 60 ft. net and initially experienced some difficulty due to the slack moving to one end in windy weather. Much of this difficulty has been overcome by "tethering" the net to the top and bottom shelf strings at 20 ft. intervals. Any net can be so modified, of course, and the interval is a matter for individual choice.

The method is -

- (a) measure the shelf string length, and divide into the required number of sections of equal length.
- (b) Measure the net length by pulling the net taut along the shelf strings. This length is considerably more than the shelf string length. Divide the net into the required number of sections of equal length.
- (c) Make a simple running loop knot in the top and bottom shelf strings at the required distances.
- (d) Tie the appropriate mesh of the net to the loop of the knot with a short length of nylon thread.
- (e) Eliminate the loop of the knots by pulling the shelf strings.
- (f) Repeat as required.

The only disadvantage of the "tethered" net is a slight tendency of the net to snag on the knots in the shelf strings. The modified net is far more satisfactory in taking small birds such as Silvereyes in windy weather.

- John Liddy, Riverside. Tasmania.