

QUEENSLAND JOTTINGS.

Lloyd Nielsen, Jandowae. Qld.

I remember a few years ago, when a bander who had been banding for some years, had remarked that "One doesn't really know birds until one commences banding", how I had thought that he might be right in what he said. At any rate, it didn't draw much of my attention at the time. And now, after only four months as a bander, I can confirm those words of my bander friend. Already, small things are beginning to come to light and "unravel" themselves.

I have been banding Crested Pigeons (Ocyphaps lophotes) and Quarrians (Leptolophus hollandicus), as well as any other species that "happens" into my nets. We have a small population of Crested Pigeons about our house most of the year - perhaps twelve to twenty birds. Previously, I took them to be residents, but banding has proved my supposition incorrect. From 4th May to 15th June this year, I banded 54 Crested Pigeons about the house. The population was a moving one. From 15th June until 23rd July, no pigeons were trapped. There was no movement and the pigeons about my house were absent. From 25th July to the time of writing (8th August) twenty pigeons have been banded, with ten retraps. Among those banded have been several juveniles. This suggests that the birds settled down to breed and continued the movement when the young were well out of the nest.

Quarrians inhabit the locality and form into flocks of several thousands. Though they are plentiful, they are not an easy bird to trap. Mist nets (wader nets) have proved the easiest and best source of capture, though baited drop traps would result in larger catches. However, the latter have a disadvantage in that they are rather expensive to maintain and also that they require constant watching to be successful.

Flocks seem to be made up of equal numbers of males and females. With drop traps I have trapped equal numbers of both sexes, but in mist nets most of the birds caught have been females (not immature males). On an average, six females to one male are caught. Probably this is because the females are more attracted by the distress cries of trapped birds than the males and are themselves caught when flying down to those in the net. Generally, neither sex is a wary bird.