

RESULTS OF REGULAR MIST-NETTING AT LAKE GEORGE.

S.J.Wilson, Canberra. A.C.T.

As mist-netting is a somewhat new activity in Australia and very little has been written about it, it has taken a little time to learn how to obtain the best results from the efforts involved. Those who are using the method regularly are now generally agreed that it is best to mist-net regularly in the one area throughout the year. It appears that every three or four weeks is about the optimum in most areas but it can be carried out much more frequently in areas where birds gather to feed and in places where migrants may be netted. If a three weeks schedule is adhered to, depending on available time it may be possible to work a few such survey areas.

One such place to which regular visits have been made over a period of over two years is the south-west corner of Lake George, N.S.W., about 30 miles north-east of Canberra. A rather steep escarpment lines the western shore and this is covered by dry sclerophyll forest. The shore is lined by tall manna gums (Eucalyptus viminalis). A bush road runs at the foot of the hill by the lake shore at the banding station and on the narrow piece of land between the road and the lake there are heavy growths of blackberries and briar roses which provide abundant food for many species of birds.

During the period March 19, 1961 to June 30, 1963, twenty-six mist-netting trips were made to the area. On all occasions the nets were in position before first light and the duration of the netting activity varied, depending on the time available and the weather. Generally the nets were dismantled about 11 a.m. Equipment used was originally a few Japanese nylon nets and up to 25 terylene nets have been used on occasions in more recent days. Experience has increased enormously during the period and this has dictated some changes in site. For these reasons a comparison of season with season is not feasible at this stage, but now that methods and equipment are more stabilised this will be possible in future years.

Some very interesting facts have emerged from this particular survey. These notes are not intended in any sense as a complete or final report, but rather as an indication of what can be achieved by regular mist-netting in the one area over an extended period.

To have a precis of results always available so as to be able to assess past activity and to plan the future, it is desirable to keep a chart giving total results by species, new bandings and retrappings for each trip. For instance, the chart can be set up with a space for species names at the left and then two $\frac{1}{4}$ " columns can be used for each trip, the first

showing new bandings (blue ink) and the second showing the retraps (red ink). The date can be shown at the top of the columns and totals and brief notes regarding the weather, number of nets and helpers can be written in below.

The following are the totals of birds banded and retrapped in this area. The retrapping figures are totals from each day and therefore represent occasions not individuals.

SPECIES	NEW BANDINGS	TOTAL RETRAPPINGS
Crimson Rosella (<u>Platycercus elegans</u>)	40	3
Eastern Rosella (<u>P. eximis</u>)	4	-
Kookaburra (<u>Dacelo gigas</u>)	4	-
Sacred Kingfisher (<u>Halcyon sancta</u>)	2	-
Fantailed Cuckoo (<u>Cucomantis pyrrhophanus</u>)	2	-
Horsfield Bronze-cuckoo (<u>Chalcites basilis</u>)	2	1
Grey Fantail (<u>Rhipidura fuliginosa</u>)	13	-
Rufous Fantail (<u>R. rufifrons</u>)	8	1
Willie Wagtail (<u>R. leucophrys</u>)	5	-
Leaden Flycatcher (<u>Myiagra rubecula</u>)	4	-
Scarlet Robin (<u>Petroica multicolor</u>)	16	-
Flame Robin (<u>P. phoenicea</u>)	4	2
Pink Robin (<u>P. rodinogaster</u>)	1	-
Rose Robin (<u>P. rosea</u>)	4	-
Southern Yellow Robin (<u>Eopsaltria australis</u>)	27	17
Golden Whistler (<u>Pachycephala pectoralis</u>)	40	6
Rufous Whistler (<u>P. rufiventris</u>)	16	4
Olive Whistler (<u>P. olivacea</u>)	1	2
Grey Shrike-thrush (<u>Colluricincla harmonica</u>)	8	5

SPECIES	NEW BANDINGS	TOTAL RETRAPPINGS
Australian Raven (<u>Corvus coronoides</u>)	1	-
Black-backed Magpie (<u>Gymnorhina tibicen</u>)	6	1
House Sparrow (<u>Passer domesticus</u>)	7	-
Goldfinch (<u>Carduelis carduelis</u>)	51	2
TOTALS - 47 species	2,115	548

Because of the relatively short period of this survey, the retraps cannot yet be regarded as really significant. This aspect of the work is of necessity a long term one and continuation of banding at this place will without doubt increase the importance of the retrap information. Already a number of species, including migrants, have been retrapped more than 12 months after the original banding.

There is no banding station within 30 miles of Lake George and therefore it is not surprising that no birds banded there have been mist-netted elsewhere. Also there have been no distant recoveries, but the increasing numbers banded increases the probability of this occurring. The major aim is regular recovery of individuals in the banding area and information on these is already quite impressive.

The survey has already had several interesting results. It has shown that the area is a "staging camp" for migratory birds, chiefly Silvereyes and Yellow-faced Honeyeaters, which feed on the blackberries during autumn, and that the shore of Lake George is a migratory route for a number of other species, including some which, judging from habitat alone, one would not expect to find in the area.

The more interesting of the banded species are discussed briefly hereunder:-

Rufous Fantail - Not resident - habitat unsuitable. Eight of this species were banded between 3.2.63 and 27.4.63. The species is probably a passage migrant but one bird was banded on February 3 and retrapped on February 24. From mist-netting experience here and elsewhere it appears that passage migrants often pause for some little time during their migrations.

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Noisy Friar-bird - A maggot of a parasitic fly was found completely embedded under the skin of the lower mandible of one of the birds netted. By removing a small scab at the point of entry, the maggot was forced out and passed alive to C.S.I.R.O. for identification. The maggot was larger than that of a blow-fly.

Red-browed Finch - This has provided the longest life history of all birds taken in this area, one bird having been taken on 19.3.61, 26.5.62, 13.10.62 and 26.4.63.

Olive-backed Oriole - An unusual migrant. Two birds were seen in the area early in March, 1963, and one was netted on 16.3.63.

Other banders, Bill Belton, John McKean and Bill Lane have banded in the area and their figures are included.

Reference: D.W.Lamm, S.J.Wilson and W.Belton, "New Information on birds of the Australian Capital Territory", Emu, 1963, 63:57 (April)

MIST-NETTING WADERS.

S.G.Lane, Lane Cove. N.S.W.

Migratory waders have a magnetic appeal to many ornithologists and these notes give some of the difficulties encountered by me when trying to band them in the Sydney area. It is hoped that they will help other banders to be more successful.

Suitable wader habitats are scarce around Sydney; the closest and best feeding ground where the largest concentrations are found is Botany Bay.

Waders have been trapped or netted successfully in other places. Here we have used mist nets and some wader nets, mostly during the hours of darkness.

Public relations make it advisable never to catch birds in public view unless onlookers can be given a full explanation of the State requirements concerning licence for trapping protected species and the penalties for catching or taking fauna illegally. Daytime operations must therefore be restrict-