

## MASS MOVEMENT OF HONEYEATERS

Between January 19 and May 2, 1964, 456 White-checked Honeyeaters (*Meliornis niger*) were netted and banded by Harry Battam and myself one mile south-west of Cabarita. The honeyeaters were feeding on *Banksia robur*, which was flowering when the area was initially investigated, and which finished flowering in early April. Nearby, a small patch of *B. aspleniifolia* flowered in April.

Between May 9 and August 22, 1964, I netted and banded on an extensive patch of *B. serratifolia* 0.6 miles north of Hastings Point. This area is one mile south-east of the Cabarita area, and the closest net positions used in the two areas would be 0.7 miles apart. The two areas are directly separated by eucalypt-covered hillocks, but a belt of heath connects them on the sea-ward side of the hillocks.

At this second netting site I have retrapped 123 of the 456 birds banded at the Cabarita

site, to give a surprising retrap rate of 27 per cent for birds banded a mile away. Now that the *B. serratifolia* has finished flowering the honeyeaters have moved, and at the time of writing (late September) I have been unable to locate any significant concentration of them. Possibly they have dispersed to the coastal *B. integrifolia* which has been flowering since mid-winter. It is assumed (and hoped) that many of the honeyeaters will return to the Cabarita area when the *B. robur* again flowers.

Brown Honeyeaters (*Gliciphila indistincta*) show a similar movement, but less impressively. Of 55 banded at Cabarita, six (11 per cent) have been retrapped at the second area. This lower rate is as expected, as overall I have retrapped over 35 per cent of all White-checked Honeyeaters banded here, but only about 10 per cent of the Brown Honeyeaters.

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## GREY - CROWNED BABBLERS

On Sept. 14, 1963, Bill Horton banded four out of a group of Grey-crowned Babblers (*Pomatostomus temporalis*) caught near a soak in the Leichhardt River approximately four miles south of Mount Isa. Band numbers used were 060-52702, 3, 4, 5. The group was of normal size consisting of ten to twelve birds.

On 22.9.63 he banded a further six Babblers out of a similar group at Stone Axe Creek some twelve miles N.N.E. of Mount Isa. Bands used were 060-52708, 09, 10, 11, 12, 13. Because of the distance between the two points, the short space of time and the absence of any retraps it seems almost certain that these birds were members of an entirely different group.

Some six months later, on 5.4.64, Bill and I caught five babblers at Stone Axe Creek at the one time, including retraps from each of the two previous groups. These were 52702, 52703, 52710 and 52712. At least two other birds in the group carried bands but escaped before the numbers were read.

Apparently this group were still together in August and were still in the Stone Axe Creek area because Ken Dredge retrapped 52703 and 52713 at Stone Axe Creek on 16.8.64.

The obvious interpretation to put on these results is that the babbler groups split up into pairs in the mating season — October to March indicated — and form new mixed family groups in the following season. The later retraps indicate that such parties may stay together until the following year.

Unfortunately we have not had a great deal of success with babblers over the last six months and have gained no further information. We would be interested, however, to hear if banders elsewhere have obtained any information that might shed light on the movement and grouping of this and related species.

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