

WINTER 1964 WITH THE WANDERERS

Last winter (1964) 104 Wandering Albatrosses (*Diomedea exulans*) were caught near Bellambi, somewhat short of the heroic totals of other years yet substantially better than the 39 in 1963.

The season started inauspiciously on July 12 with a catch of one and was followed by seven more sorties up to September 5, with totals of 15, 22, 15, 10, 19, 8 and 15. Thus the average was 13 birds per trip and the time spent at sea was fairly consistent at 2½ to 3 hours. In this time at least 10 square miles of ocean can be scanned and practically all of the "catchable" birds processed.

Over the period only one bird was caught twice, which again graphically illustrates the large numbers which must be involved in these coastal concentrations. Retraps from former years comprised 26% (27 of the total catch), representing birds banded in all years from 1958 onwards. Many of these are building up impressive records, amongst the most notable being:

140-25065. First banded at Bellambi in August, 1958, and retrapped at the same place in July, 1961. In January, 1963, it was banded as an adult on Bird Island, South Georgia (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service band no. 528-75850). Last August it was again netted at Bellambi wearing the Australian and American rings plus a black plastic spiral evidently attached on South Georgia.

140-25057. Banded at Bellambi in July, 1960. March, 1961, saw it on South Georgia, where it

was numbered 528-71575. It returned to Long Ridge, Bird Island (South Georgia) in February, 1962, and was caught again at Bellambi last August (1964).

140-25101 was a Malabar catch in July, 1959. It was retrapped at Bellambi last August, but in the meantime had evidently made the crossing to South Georgia because it bore a black plastic spiral on the right leg.

W. L. N. Tickell, who for several years has been undertaking an extensive population study of the wanderer on South Georgia for the U.S. Antarctic Research Programme, writes (6/7/64) that "a lot" of our banded birds have been recovered there in the summers 1962/63 and 1963/64, but I am still awaiting further details of these.

Our two most regular patrons at Bellambi are 140-25079 (1959-60-61-62-64), and 140-25070 (1958-60-62-64).

Monel metal bands are now used exclusively and all retraps are being changed. Even the oldest aluminium bands are still quite legible, but some loss of thickness and softening is taking place and, even worse, some are being lost. There have been instances where an aluminium colour band (from either 1959 or 1960) remains, but the numbered ring is missing and vice-versa.

Difficulties prevented any albatross banding at Malabar last season.

—J. D. Gibson, 12 Redman Ave., Thirroul,
N.S.W.

Dispersal of Juvenile Brown Goshawks

In the Seventh Annual Report of the Australian Bird-banding scheme, July, 1960, to June, 1961 (*Division of Wildlife Research Technical Paper No. 4, C.S.I.R.O., Aust., 1963, p. 34*), W. B. Hitchcock suggested that young Brown Goshawks (*Accipiter fasciatus*) disperse widely during their first year. Subsequent recoveries of bands of the species confirm the accuracy of Hitchcock's deduction.

On 2.11.64 I banded three downy nestlings about 20 days old in a fairly low nest in mallee scrub two miles south-west of Sutherlands, S.A. These nestlings would not have left the nest until the beginning of December at the earliest, and they probably did not become independent of their parents and leave the locality until the end

of that month. All three young were recovered at widely separated localities at distances of 38, 77 and 78 miles from the next site, all in January, 1965. Details of these recoveries are given in "Recovery Round-Up" (p. 36 of this issue).

The Brown Goshawk is wholly unprotected by law in South Australia, and its habits of haunting poultry yards and the vicinity of domestic pigeon lofts often results in the hawks being shot. Nevertheless, the recovery of all individuals in a brood of three Goshawks in so short a period is altogether remarkable and apparently unprecedented in Australian bird-banding.

—E. F. Boehm, Sutherlands, S.A.