

# The Bird Banders' Association of Australia Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Bird Banders' Association of Australia was held on Saturday, January 22, 1966, in Canberra. A hall in the C.S.I.R.O. buildings at Black Mountain, A.C.T., was made available to the Association for the purpose.

The retiring President, Mr. S. J. Wilson, welcomed all present and gave a brief outline of the agenda for the meeting.

After apologies were received the reports of the Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer were given. The President then gave his retiring address in which he outlined briefly the results of the conference between C.S.I.R.O. officers and the State Regional Organisers. The President's address and the Secretary's and Treasurer's reports appear on the following pages.

The election of officers followed and the panel of office bearers for 1966 is as follows:

President:	H. J. de S. Disney
Vice-Presidents:	M. H. Waterman (S.A.) J. Liddy (N.S.W.) Mrs. P. N. Reilly (Vic.)
Past Presidents:	S. G. Lane, S. J. Wilson
Hon. Secretary:	B. S. Carter
Hon. Asst. Secretary:	H. Battam
Hon. Editor:	Dr. A. M. Gwynn

Hon. Asst. Editor:	H. J. de S. Disney
Hon. Treasurer:	R. G. Lonnon

Mr. Disney took the chair for the rest of the meeting.

Messrs. C. B. Campion and M. T. Murn were elected Auditors and Mr. S. G. Lane expressed the committee's thanks for the work done in this capacity by Mr. G. T. Bush for the Association since its inception.

Subscriptions for 1966 remain unchanged at the levels operating for 1965.

There being no general business, the annual meeting closed, and after a break the assembly was addressed by Dr. H. J. Frith, Chief of the Wildlife division of the C.S.I.R.O., his subject being Magpie Geese. This proved to be a very enlightening talk and, accompanied as it was by a series of colour slides, gave those present an inside look at some of the work done by Dr. Frith in the Northern Territory. There were about 56 people present to hear Dr. Frith's talk, the majority being members of the Association.

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## Retiring President's Address

In two respects the past year has been a time of trial for the Association. Firstly, commercial printing of *The Australian Bird Bander* was commenced and, secondly, the idea of an "out of Sydney" President was tried.

Thanks to the efforts of those Committee members living in Sydney we have had a successful year. The "Bird Bander" is being accepted among ornithologists, membership is increasing and the number of contributors and standard of material offering for publication have been satisfactory. Ideas regarding committee working methods with an absent President have evolved well. I would like to thank all those involved in these tasks for their efforts, and particularly Peter Spurge who is not a member of the committee but has helped greatly with the production of the maga-

zine. It is regretted that our Senior Vice-President, Mr. C. B. Campion, has been forced to resign from the Committee due to private commitments.

In view of the far-reaching effects of decisions made at the two-day conference of Regional Organisers at the Division of Wildlife Research, C.S.I.R.O., Canberra, on January 20 and 21, it is appropriate to give an outline of these matters.

Dr. H. J. Frith in his opening remarks to the Conference traced the general history of the Australian Bird Banding Scheme. When the Division of Wildlife Research first began its

serious ornithological studies, a banding scheme, essential to many studies, was lacking in Australia and so one was set up by the Division.

### **Explosive Growth of Banding**

An indication of the explosive growth of banding is readily obtained from the numbers of birds banded over the past five years. In 1960/61 46,820 were banded and the estimate for 1964/65 is 120,000. Much of this can be attributed to the extensive use of mist nets. In 1960/61 6,213 birds were caught by mist net and in 1964/65 the corresponding figure was 71,412.

Since the inception of the Scheme there has been no restriction on amateur banding and in this aspect the Australian Scheme is virtually unique. In the United Kingdom banders pay for all bands used, and in the United States there are regional restrictions on banding. In Holland no new banders have been enrolled since 1962 and the banding of certain species is prohibited; this was necessary to reduce the administrative load.

Dr. Frith stated that the Banding Scheme was one of the more expensive parts of the Division and, as overall Commonwealth budgets are not steadily increasing, great increases in the money available to the Scheme from C.S.I.R.O. could only be provided by the Division at the expense of one or other of its field projects; so in the Division there is some competition for money and staff. Those projects producing the best scientific results in the way of published papers obviously have the best claim on finance and staff.

### **Annual Reports Delayed**

The present situation in the Scheme is that because of the explosive increase in the use of bands, the annual reports are very badly delayed and the small staff is bogged down in paper work. Also, because of restricted finance the Scheme cannot provide bands in ever increasing numbers. The Scheme is costing the Commonwealth approximately £10,000 per year to run and ways must be found to restrict expenditure to that amount.

It was evident to the conference that C.S.I.R.O. is justified in asking that value be given for money spent. So far as the Scheme is concerned this value is seen in the Banding and retrapping data on file in the Banding Office, in the Annual Report and in papers published which detail the results of research based on banding. It was emphasised in this context that banding of birds is not an end in itself. Banding is a research technique only and must be viewed in that light.

It follows therefore that the trend must be

towards a more scientific approach to bird banding. While basic new ideas were formulated and decisions made at the conference, much more thought will be required in regard to exact methods of application of these ideas. The basic trend will be towards individual or co-operative projects each of which must have some definite scientific methods and objectives. Results of projects must be published either by the individuals involved or by others co-operating.

### **Report to All Banders**

The conference decided that the first step would be the preparation of a comprehensive report and this will go to every registered bander. At the same time each bander will be asked to indicate, in full detail, what he proposes to do in future under the Scheme; how he proposes to carry out his project; and something of the results which could be hoped for. Some amateur banders are already participating in research programmes directly controlled by C.S.I.R.O. and it is envisaged that this form of activity will be extended in the future.

A committee on which amateur banders will be represented will consider each project. Where a project is approved, bands will be provided free but bands used outside approved projects may have to be paid for by the bander concerned.

The conference decided that it would be unwise to exclude new banders but those joining the Scheme in future will have to attain a higher standard of proficiency prior to acceptance than has been the case in the past. It also seemed possible that present numbers of banders may be reduced but no ideas were developed as to how this may come about.

The whole idea behind the conference decisions is: (a) to reduce the numbers of birds banded to make it possible for the present office staff to cope with the accumulating data; and (b) to get the greatest possible scientific result from the efforts and money expended.

Economy in the use of bands may develop ultimately through prohibitions on the banding of certain species where a considerable volume of data has accumulated, and by the termination of projects when it is considered that continued banding of certain species would be repetitive.

All these ideas are in embryo only at this stage but it is very clear that the trend is not towards more banding but towards better banding in the broadest sense of the term. In effect the conference decisions are in full accord with the

aims of the Association as evidenced in *The Australian Bird Bander* over the last three years.

This is a time of formulation of new ideas and it is advisable for banders to commence to think in terms of scientific value from their work. After the issue of the report a period of active development of banders' ideas will follow and it is almost unnecessary to comment that all possible assistance will be provided by C.S.I.R.O., by Regional Organisers and by the Association in the development of project ideas.

Confirming remarks were made by Mr. S. G. Lane, Regional Organiser (N.S.W.) and Dr. H. J. Frith, Chief of Division of Wildlife Research.

## Secretary's Report

Volume 3 of the Australian Bird Bander was completed in four parts comprising 80 pages in all, two issues were of 16 pages and two of 24 pages.

The 24-page issues were exceptionally well received by members and we aim ultimately to produce an issue of this size each quarter. However, our venture into commercial printing of the journal was based on 16-page issues and costs are the main limiting factor which prevent our producing a 24-page journal; the other factor is the material on hand which may fall short. Happily this position does not look like eventuating as the contributors are producing a steady stream of manuscripts.

As to the contents of Vol. 3 (Comparative figures for Vol. 2 in brackets):

- 21 (22) authors contributed 27 (14) major articles,
- 9 (8) species were treated in "Bird in the Hand",

7 (4) reviews of reports, original articles, etc., were included.

157 Recoveries of 66 species were listed in "Recovery Round-up" compared with 67 and 32 in Vol. 2.

In addition numerous short notes, extracts from letters, etc., have appeared.

The committee has met each month to conduct the business of the association and to read the galley proofs for each journal.

It was with regret that the committee accepted the resignation of Vice-President Clive Campion, who, because of increasing business and family commitments, felt that he could not devote enough time to carry out the tasks in the manner he would have liked to. The Association will forever be in debt to Clive for the time and energy he expended especially during the time when the journal was produced by hand.

**Membership:** The membership position at 31.12.65 compared with 31.12.64 is as follows:

	31.12.65	31.12.64	Increase
Full Members	178	157	21
Associates	131	109	22
Junior	67	57	10
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	376	323	53

During the year 10 Associates or Juniors (who have attained the age of 18 years) have been granted Banding Permits and thus have become full members of the Association.

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to extend our thanks to those who have helped us during the year, especially Peter Spurge who has been of immense help and value to the Committee during the trials and tribulations connected with the commercial printing of the "Bander".

B. S. Carter, Hon. Secretary.

## NEW MEMBERS

### Full Members:

- ASHMAN, R. B., c/- Division of Wildlife Research, Canberra, A.C.T.
- BRAITHWAITE, W., c/- Division of Wildlife Research, Canberra, A.C.T.
- CHAPMAN, F. R. H., Coromandel Valley, S.A.
- CUNNINGHAM, C. J., Box 552, Darwin, N.T.
- D'ANDRIA, A. H., c/- Division of Wildlife Research, Canberra, A.C.T.
- FISHER, J. H., Hay River Estate, Narrikup, W.A.

### Associate Members:

- ATKINSON, F., King Street, Narrandera, N.S.W.
- BARKER, K., P.O. Box 281, Red Cliffs, Vic.

- BATCHELDER, K., 17283 S.W. Blue Heron Road, Lake Oswego, Oregon, U.S.A.
- BENNETT, C., 61 Park Avenue, Avalon, N.S.W.
- BIRCH, Mrs. W. R. M., c/- Botany Dept., University College of Townsville, Townsville, Q'ld.
- BISHOP, R. J., 23 Dundas Road, Maryborough, Vic.
- BLAYLOCK, B. G., 51 Port Road, Queenstown, S.A.
- BRADLEY, H. A., 1 Scarborough Avenue, Beaumaris, Vic.
- BUFTS, G., c/- Division of Wildlife Research, Canberra, A.C.T.
- CAMERON, R. G., Sevenoaks Street, Balwyn, E.8, Vic.