

Silver Gull Banding

A note on the Silver Gull banding programme published two years ago (Carrick and Murray, 1965) drew attention to the large-scale colour-banding initiated in October 1964 by the banding with "Scotchlite" bands on one leg of 5,000 chicks on Five Islands off Port Kembla, N.S.W. The programme was continued in 1965, and a large number of gull chicks have now been banded with various combinations of white, green, blue, black and yellow at the Five Islands, Moon Island, Montague Island and Lake Bathurst. Anyone who has sighted any of these birds and wishes to know their origin can obtain

than about 12 days. (In 1964, I retrapped a juvenile banded as a nestling one month earlier. It was estimated to have left the nest about 3 weeks previously and certainly was more advanced than the above-mentioned bird).

It seems reasonable to assume that the measurements listed in Group A would be for females and those in Group B for males, even allowing for a slight increase in wing span with increasing age as occurs in the New Holland Honeyeater.

The stretched wing span measurement can only be taken with live birds or fresh specimens. There are only two juvenile specimens (unable to be sexed by plumage) in the Australian Museum Collection for which this stretched wing span measurement is available. Data for these two specimens are as follows:

(a) bill 21 mm. wing span 184 mm., sex female.
(b) bill 23.5 mm., wing span 202 mm. sex male.

The data support the theory but further evidence is desirable. This can only be obtained by banding and subsequent retrapping or by obtaining further museum specimens.

I wish to thank Harry Battam who provided a considerable proportion of the measurements and John Disney who, in addition to providing data, read and commented on the manuscript.

References:

- Disney, H. J. de S. (1963), "Bird in the Hand", *Aust. Bird Bander*, 1:137.
Disney, H. J. de S. (1966), "Bird in the Hand", *Aust. Bird Bander*, 4:14.
Wilson, S. J. (1964), "The Eastern Spinebill in the A.C.T.", *Aust. Bird Bander*, 2:100-106.

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the information from me or through their regional organiser.

The general picture of the dispersal and movements of the Silver Gull (*Larus novaehollandiae*) is now fairly well known as a result of recoveries and sighting reports from ten years' banding (Murray and Carrick, 1964), and this picture has been confirmed by the reports of sightings of the birds colour-banded in 1964. Further, sightings of colour-banded birds is therefore likely mainly to confirm what is already known, but sightings from regions other than the central coast of New South Wales are still of interest.

An important innovation introduced in 1965 was the banding of some birds with a large aluminium band upon which had been stamped four times along the long axis, a five figure number (see front cover photo). These numbers may be read with a good pair of binoculars. The number on the bird illustrated is clearly legible in the full plate enlargement of the original photograph taken with a "Pentax" camera with a 135 mm lens at about six feet. It is hoped that the introduction of these numbered bands, legible at a distance, will make it possible to study the movements and behaviours of individual birds in a way which will throw new light on the population ecology of the species. For this reason we are most anxious to receive reports from banders and other bird watchers of the whereabouts of individual gulls wearing these new bands and it is hoped that ardent bird watchers will "adopt" individual gulls, as the most useful information to be gathered at present is that on the behaviour of specific birds—their daily activities and movements, etc.

References:

- Murray, M. D. and Carrick, R. C. (1964), "Seasonal Movements and Habitats of the Silver Gull, *Larus novaehollandiae*, Stephens, in South-Eastern Australia", *CSIRO Wildl. Res.*, 9:160-188.
Carrick, R. and Murray, M. D. (1965), "The Silver Gull Banding Programme", *Aust. Bird Bander*, 3:14.

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