

The Feral Pigeon - A New Breeding Species At Five Islands, N.S.W.

A flock of about twelve pigeons (*Columba livia*) was seen on November 26, 1966, on Big Island, one of the Five Islands group, near Wollongong, New South Wales. Further investigation by Bywater revealed two nests in rock crevices on the north side of the island. One of the nests contained two eggs and the other two chicks. There is no previous record of pigeons nesting on the Five Islands. It is possible that they may have been overlooked for some time. On December 8, 1966, a pigeon carrying a size eight CSIRO band joined a flock of homing pigeons at their loft in Riverwood, New South Wales. This event was reported to the Bird-banding Office where the records revealed that the particular band was put on a Silver Gull (*Larus novaehollandiae*) pullet at Five Islands on November 10, 1962. It may be that a practical joker transferred the band from a dead gull to a live pigeon. It is likely, however, that a young pigeon was banded instead of a young gull. There is a superficial resemblance between the chicks of the two species although it hardly merits a "Bird in the Hand" article in this journal.

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(There have been some instances where a practical joker has removed a band from a bird probably found dead and placed it on the leg of a different species.—Editor).

Banding Publications Group

Field and in-hand techniques and various methods of analysis of banding results developed in other countries can often be adapted to Australian conditions. There is now a rather extensive literature devoted primarily to banding, and access to this literature can be of material assistance to banders. Over the past year, some ten banders have combined to subscribe to banding journals, and these journals are circulated regularly to each bander in turn. Sufficient material is now available to allow additional banders to participate, if they so desire. It is felt that participation in the group would be of particular benefit to country banders, working in relative isolation. For details write to John Liddy, 5 Ben Street, Chermside, Qld.

A Net Tethering Tip

The advantages of tethered nets have become so well accepted that the Mist Net Service of the Bird Banders' Association of Australia states that "all future imports will be tethered". (*The Australian Bird Bander*, Vol. 2, No. 3, p. 88.) This means top tethering only.

Many banders have found that for their conditions of wind, by tethering the net bottom in addition to the top they obtain a further very great improvement. This applies in my case.

My first nets were not tethered at all. It was thus necessary to hang the nets full length to evenly space the mesh before tethering. To eliminate disarray by wind, and provide the necessary contrasting background during tethering, the nets were hung in the house. True, a forty-foot net needed to start in one room, cross another and enter a third, with slight kinks at the doors, but it worked well for both tops and bottoms.

The arrival of two 60 ft. nets meant that my routine site was definitely too short, and a longer one was not available. I found that by restating the problem the answer came easily.

What was really required was just to tether the bottom of the new 60 ft. nets to match the already tethered tops. To do this the net was hung along one light coloured wall with the top and bottom shelf strings uppermost and side by side at breast height. After securing the new tethering cord to the end ring of the bottom shelf string the first new tethering knot was tied exactly opposite its top cord mate after counting into this first bay the same number of meshes as in the top tether.

Having matched knot to knot and meshes to meshes per bay along the first fifteen feet of net, the last bottom cord knot was tied securely but temporarily to its top cord mate by a contrasting piece of tape, the net rehung and the process repeated on the next fifteen feet. Care must be taken at each move that the tethering cord and shelf strings remain matched for length and tension.

—J. S. Robertson,
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