

## EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

While visiting Australia last year, Lord Medway (University of Malaya) who is the leader of the banding scheme in Malaysia (conducted under the Migratory Animal Pathological Survey Programme), was the guest of some of the Sydney banders on field operations. The following is an extract from his letter to Bill Lane dated 25.8.66. The swallow referred to in the letter is the Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*):—

“ . . . That day at Shaw's Creek was a memorable one. I had never seen birds coming to the nets in such steady numbers, and the surroundings were wonderful. It was one of the highlights of what really was the best holiday I have ever had.

“Out of 25,000 swallows ringed, we have at last got our first recoveries—two only—both from eastern Russia—one from just south of Lake Baikal (almost exactly due north of us), the other well to the east, on the bit of Russia running down beside Japan. There must be some at least being caught in China, and I'm afraid not reported.”

A letter dated 23.9.66, from Evan Cleland, Port Moresby, states:

“Gradually, our skill improves as bird finders. We are slowly getting bigger lists for outings and by altering locations of nets with experience, we are getting (sometimes) better catches.

“Our drought has not made banding easier—but the other day when Jack Wheeler was here, a banding outing was drowned in a thunderstorm! However, the next weekend I set up alongside puddles along a forest track with the best and most interesting results to date—netted were Saw-billed Kingfisher (male and female), Allied Honeyeater, Yellow-bellied Warbler, Black Flower-Pecker, Large-billed Flycatcher, Pied Frilled Flycatcher, a Whistler (?) and good sightings of Giant Fairy Wrens (male, female and juvenile), Black-throated Fantail, Black-throated Monarch and a Large-billed Flycatcher giving a rendition of every call in its album trying to distract me from its mate in the net—it did too for about five minutes”.

On 28 September 1966, in reply to a letter from Doug. Gibson, Jean Prevost (Muséum national d'histoire naturelle, Paris) wrote:

“I hope you will excuse me for not replying sooner to your letter but I was waiting for the return to France of the expedition which ringed the albatrosses at Kerguelen in order to give you all the facts.

“*Diomedea exulans* No. CF4984 was ringed on 7 January, 1966, on Kerguelen (Courbet Peninsula, Pointe Scott) 49° 7' S, 70° 6' E. It was one of a mated pair. . . .

“Since 1 January, 1966, at both Kerguelen and Possession Island several species of antarctic birds have been ringed including albatrosses and Giant Petrels. More than 300 albatrosses were ringed on Kerguelen in January and February, 1966, and operations will continue at Possession Island.”

(See Recovery Round-up P. 15.)

### ANOTHER REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

In a letter dated 23 Aug., 66, Mr I. J. Lewis, Research Officer, Cattle Tick Research Station, Wollongbar, N.S.W., wrote:

“We are particularly interested in the Queensland border area which has a history of recurrent outbreaks of tick fever. The cattle tick is well controlled by dipping in New South Wales and it is thought that infected Queensland ticks might find their way across the border. They would be blown over or carried by man, his domestic animals, wild animals or birds. It is most unlikely that the cattle tick (*Boophilus microplus*) would attach to birds and engorge, but it is possible that the larvae could “hitch a ride”, as it were, by clinging on to the feathers and dropping off while the bird is in flight or at the end of its flight.

“If anyone sent us ticks we would be very pleased to identify them or send them to the appropriate expert.

“Specimens should be preserved in 70-80% alcohol. This can best be made up by mixing 4 parts of methylated spirits with 1 part of water. Small tubes with water tight stoppers are suitable containers for transport.”