

## The Recording Of Banding Locations

In the process of attempting the computer analysis of banding data, we have discovered several points that are thwarting our efforts. The biggest problem is that many banders supply insufficient details to enable us to accurately pinpoint the banding site, or are not consistent in the description of it on successive schedules.

Owing to the limited amount of data which can be punched on to a Hollerith card we have to convert the bander's identification of the banding site (e.g. Tangambalanga, Vic.) to co-ordinates ( $36^{\circ} 14' S.$ ;  $147^{\circ} 02' E.$ ) This is easy if the site is reasonably well known and can be located on our maps. However, it must be remembered that although a place is well known to you it may not be to others. In the case of an obscure banding site a great deal of research is often required to locate it.

It is most important, therefore, that a **full** and **accurate** description be supplied to enable us to pinpoint it on a map, e.g. Ugooladoogo Swamp,  $10\frac{1}{2}$  miles S.W. Bourke, N.S.W. If the feature covers a large area, e.g. Wilson's Promontory, Vic., please always state precisely where, within this area, you are banding. This also applies to creeks and rivers as these run for many miles and are often not marked on any maps.

Several banders operating the same banding station often give a different description of it. For instance, one bander may state that a certain site is 8 miles south of one town, while another bander may describe it as being 12 miles north-east of a different town. Unless these two descriptions are accurate in both mileage and direction, which usually they are not, different co-ordinates are worked out for them. This itself is not too serious until one bander retraps a bird banded by the other bander. When this happens, because of the two different sets of co-ordinates, the computer records it as a movement instead of a retrap at banding place.

Therefore not only is an accurate identification of the banding site required, but it must be ensured that all banders use an identical description for the same location.

Another common, and serious fault, is that some banders give a very broad identification of the banding site, e.g. Orange, N.S.W., even though, unknown to us, they were banding perhaps 8 miles out of the town. In this case we naturally use the co-ordinates for the centre of the town ( $33^{\circ} 17' S.$ ;  $149^{\circ} 06' E.$ ). Subsequently other banders, or even the same bander, may band in the same site but give an accurate description, e.g. Long Gully Road (eastern end), 8 M.S. Orange, N.S.W. The co-ordinates for this site are ( $33^{\circ} 14' S.$ ;  $149^{\circ} 06' E.$ ) and the distance between the two sets of co-ordinates is 8 miles. From this it can be readily seen that retrap data will often be false—a movement of 8 miles instead of at banding place. This is not of great significance in migratory species, but is very significant in resident species such as some smaller passerines.

Considering the above points a lot of our data will be of doubtful value for computer analysis unless we can achieve some sort of order. The magnitude of this task becomes apparent when it is realised that there are nearly half a million Hollerith cards already punched.

The format of the present banding schedule is shortly to be changed and banders will be asked to enter their own co-ordinates. It is realised that many banders do not have access to the necessary maps and may have to request the banding office to supply the required co-ordinates. For this purpose special request cards will be supplied with the new schedules.

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