Recent Literature

BANDING and RECOVERY REPORTS

Report on Bird-ringing for 1968. Robert Spencer. 1969. *British Birds*, 62:393-442.

During 1968, once again record numbers of birds were banded (593,917) and recovered (14,813) in Britain and Ireland. As usual the list of recoveries is highly selective; full data are given for only about 500 of the 14,813 recoveries, but recoveries for some species are summarized. Foreign recoveries of White-fronted Geese, three species of waders, and Robins are mapped. The recoveries include the Common Tern banded as an adult 17 May 1959 at Copeland, Ireland and recovered on 26 October 1969 at Kow Swamp, Victoria (See *Aust. Bird Bander*, 7:36).

Fourteenth Ringing Report. C. C. H. Elliott and M. J. F. Jarvis. 1970. *Ostrich*, 41:1-117.

This report covers the five years to June 1968, and the organizers of the South African banding scheme are to be congratulated for bringing their reports up to date. (The New Zealand scheme is now about five years late with their reports, and it is hoped that the New Zealand organizers can emulate their South African counterparts in the near future). For the five years, 188,396 birds were banded, the yearly totals being 24,620; 35,601; 45,298; 40,535 and 42,342 respectively. The organizers consider that about 45,000 bandings per year may prove a ceiling unless new methods or banders eventuate. The number of species banded each year was relatively stable, varying only between 347 and 372 over the five years. There were 1,631 recoveries reported, and for the first time these include 159 retrap records which are included because either the retrap locality differed significantly from the place of banding, or the time elapsed between banding and retrapping exceeded three years. It is most pleasing to note that full data continue to be given for all recoveries, (and in the present paper these occupy some 62 pages) and the South African Scheme is now almost the only one which does this. Brief comment is given on some aspects of interest deriving from the recoveries. Of particular interest is the ten pages of recoveries of European Swallows, including 213 from Europe (149 from U.S.S.R., 41 from Britain and Ireland, and 23 from the rest of Europe). European Starlings in South Africa seem to be as local as their Australian counterparts, as the longest movement from 19 recoveries was only 18 miles, and most were recovered within three miles of the banding place.

ANALYTICAL STUDIES

The White-breasted Cormorant in South Africa. M. J. F. Jarvis. 1970. *Ostrich*, 41:118-119.

Recoveries of the widely-distributed White-breasted Cormorant banded at two fresh water localities in South Africa are compared. It is suggested that differences in recovery patterns indicate that two ecologically separated populations are present in South Africa.

Mortality and Dispersal of Ringed Cattle Egrets. W. R. Siegfried. 1970. *Ostrich*, 41:122-135.

The mortality rate is based upon 182 recoveries of birds banded before 1959. First year mortality averaged 37 per cent for the whole of South Africa, and this appears very low when compared with some northern hemisphere herons. Adult (after first year) mortality averaged 25 per cent. Seasonal mortality rates of birds banded at various localities are tabulated and discussed. About 90 per cent of birds are reported "dead", "dying" or "injured", and shooting is only a minor cause of mortality. At fledging, the Egret has a life expectancy of 3.0 years, and further life expectancy for first to fourth year birds remains at 3.3 to 3.5 years, after which it decreases sharply. Most birds disperse in a northerly direction, and there is geographical variation in the pattern of dispersion, probably due to topographical and climatic factors. No evidence of true migration was found.

TECHNIQUES

Woodcock Banding on the Cape May Peninsula, New Jersey. Joseph C. Rieffenberger and Fred Ferrigno. 1970. *Bird-Banding*, 41:1-10.

During autumnal migration, 644 Woodcock (*Philohela minor*) were captured by nightlighting on Cape May Peninsula, New Jersey, U.S.A. When vehicles could not be used in particular fields, Woodcock were captured on foot, using spotlights and long-handled nets. In suitable fields, use of a slowly moving vehicle was more successful, as the noise of the idling engine covered the approach of the banders and resulted in less flushing. Other advantages of a vehicle were a brighter light (from the truck power supply) and a higher vantage point which made sighting of the Woodcock easier.

(*Spotlighting is being used successfully in Australia for catching quail* - see vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 35-36).

A Method for Trapping Breeding Adult Gulls. David K. Weaver and John A. Kadlec. 1970. *Bird-Banding*, 41:28-31.

A modified "lobster-pot" trap for trapping nesting Herring Gulls (*Larus argentatus*) is described and illustrated.

A Device for Handling Mist Nets in the Dark. Marion Anne Jenkinson and Robert M. Mengel. 1970. *Bird-Banding*, 41:38-39.

Nocturnal singing birds were netted by playing recordings of their songs in the vicinity of a mist net. To eliminate tangling the net with vegetation during erection and dismantling in the dark, a net cover was devised. This cover is made of dark-coloured lightweight chiffon, and is the length of the mist net and 11 inches wide. Tapes are sewn along all four sides, and press-studs are fitted to these tapes, including the two short end tapes. To dismantle, the net is bundled on the poles, is then enveloped with the cover, and clipped in with the press-studs. The poles and net can then be removed, free of tangles. The reverse procedure is used during erection.

Danger of Wing-tagging. (Nebezpeci kridelnich znacek). Jiri Havlin. 1969. *Vertebrat. zpravy*, 1969 (2):67-70. (In Czech., with English summary).

Some disadvantages of wing-tagging young birds are discussed. It is recommended that the standard tags be modified by decreasing the size of the tag eyelet; this

lessens the possibility of the tag passing over the underdeveloped wing and later damaging the wing as it develops. Adults may try to remove wing-tags on young (either hatched or in pipped eggs), causing damage or death to the nestling in some cases. It is suggested that tagged birds be returned to the nest with the wing-tag hidden if possible. For young tagged in the egg, it is suggested that the tag be pushed into the egg; on hatching the adults apparently accept the tag and do not try to remove it.

Wing-tagging Ducklings in Pipped Eggs. Jiri Havlin. 1968. *Journal of Wildlife Management*, 32:172-174.

Wing-tagging of ducklings may cause losses if the birds leave the nest prematurely, and the incubating female follows them. The technique of applying the wing-tag in the egg while hatching is underway is described and recommended. In one sample loss of young tagged in pipped eggs equalled normal losses in successful nests, while losses of young tagged only after hatching were twice as high as normal losses.

MISCELLANEOUS

Recommendations for an International Standard for a Mapping Method in Bird Census Work. 1969. *Bird Study*, 16:249-255.

Many banders have chosen area surveys as their banding project, and some are combining banding with census work. It may be desirable that this census work follow the recommendations of the International Bird Census Committee for those aspects which apply to Australian conditions. These recommendations are based on the mapping of breeding territories and apply basically to non-colonial passerines; the method is most useful where breeding is strictly seasonal, e.g. northern Europe. Fairly detailed recommendations are given for the organization of the census plot, organization of the census work, methods of recording and evaluation of records.

Orientation Behaviour of Ring-billed Gull Chicks and Fledglings. William E. Southern. 1969. *Condor*, 71: 418-425.

Orientation cage experiments were carried out on 294 Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*) chicks from a colony on Lake Huron, Michigan, U.S.A. Preferential headings of E., S.E. and S. were shown by more than half (57.8 per cent) of the chicks; these headings correspond to the initial autumn migration of the species. During magnetic storms there was a decrease in the intensity of the selection of these headings, but this is inconclusive as only mild storms were experienced during the experiments. Sixty juvenile gulls were subjected to homing trials for their maiden flight: about half (51.8 per cent) selected E. or S.E. courses. The study suggests that many, if not all, young gulls from the colony have an inate ability for selecting a flight path which enables them to reach their main wintering grounds.

REVIEWS

An Index of Australian Bird Names. Compiled by CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research, Technical Paper No. 20, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization, Australia, 1969. 93 pp.

The primary object of this useful publication is to record an acceptable and uniform English vernacular name for every Australian bird species, and to give other names that may be used in various parts of the species' range. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list, but is confined to those considered to be in use in recent times. A comprehensive Index covers 14 pages for common names and 13 for scientific titles. I regret that capitals have been discarded, except for the commencing letter, the latter no doubt being given solely because of the name arrangement and would be altered when appearing in the middle of a sentence. Capitals for specific vernaculars have been the usual practise in ornithological journals for many years, although change in this system has been advocated recently. Capitals should always be used for names of persons, places, days, months etc. and to my view it would be just as illogical to write "north sydney" or "raymond terrace" as it is to give "chestnut quail-thrush" or "Chestnut quail-thrush".

However, despite the main purpose for publication and the usefulness of such a well-planned Australian list of English names, I found the treatment and arrangement of scientific names the most interesting part of the book. It is clearly stated "This Index is not to be regarded as a Checklist of Australian birds . . . Nevertheless some decision had to be made as to the selection of names, the systematic arrangement of the species, and the limits of the taxonomic categories employed". In the systematic arrangement the list follows closely that employed by its State predecessors—*Birds of Western Australia*, 4th edn., *A Handlist of the Birds of South Australia*, *List of Northern Territory Birds*, *A Hand List of the Birds of New South Wales*, etc. As the latest official *Checklist* was published in 1926, and as extremely few publications covering all Australian birds have appeared since, the specific limits are most likely to cause debate. I believe that the limits given have greatly uplifted the value of the book and I would like to think that the next *Official Checklist*, when completed, will vary extremely little from the specific decisions included in this Index.

A count gives a total of 730 species, including about 20 introduced and established, which is far different from the offttimes quoted 650 recorded from Australia. However, there is scarcely one species included which is not worthy of the distinction, and possibly a further ten could be added safely to make the final total workable in field ornithology. Those relegated to subspecies such as *Sericornis humilis*, *Cinclosoma castaneothorax*, *Monarcha melanopsis*, *Gerygone tenebrosa*, *Ailuroedus crassirostris*, *Ptiloris victoriae*, *Amytornis dorotheae*, etc., are just as distinct to most observers as are *Chrysococcyx lucidus*, *Malurus leucopterus*, *Pardalotus ornatus*, etc., which are accepted as species in the Index.

An Index of Australian Bird Names is available from the CSIRO and should be in the library of every keen ornithologist, be read carefully and regularly referred to in all nomenclatural problems.

A. R. McGILL, Arncliffe, N.S.W.