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## ORDER OF AUSTRALIA — MR STEPHEN JAMES WILSON

Steve Wilson, a long-standing member of the ABSA, was recently awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the 1997 Queen's Birthday honours for services to ornithological research, bird-banding and the community.

Steve first developed an interest in birds in the 1960s when he moved to Canberra from Melbourne. Two of his school age sons, Brendan and Dennis, were particularly keen to become involved in bird banding but as they were not old enough to be issued with a Bird Banding Authority, Steve applied for, and was issued with, an Authority by CSIRO, who administered the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme at that time.

Bird banding was a relatively new technique in Australian field ornithology then and Steve quickly became proficient in its use. He established a number of banding stations throughout the Australian Capital Territory, including a site in the Brindabella Ranges, New Chums Road, which was visited every month for nearly 20 years. His interest in bird research soon outstripped that of his sons, and he recruited a number of interested school boys to assist in the banding projects he had undertaken. Under his tutelage, many of these boys developed their interest to a degree where they decided to make science their career. At least seven of them (and I am one) are now employed throughout Australia and the South Pacific in positions relating to nature conservation and ornithology.

Steve has made a huge contribution to ornithology in the Canberra region in particular, and at 86 years of age continues to do so. He has authored over forty papers, five of which were written or co-authored within the last three years, and is still analysing data from the New Chums Road project. He has also

contributed to books on the birds of the Australian Capital Territory, writing many of the species treatises for the *Birds of the Australian High Country* and the *Readers Digest Book of Australian Birds*.

Steve was a foundation member of the ABSA and served as President from 1964 to 1966. In 1962 he started the Mist Net Service, which he ran for a period of 14 years. Initially started with a loan of 100 pounds (\$200.00), he quickly repaid this amount from profits and placed the Mist Net Service in a position where it was self funding, running from profits generated from sales. The Service has been used continuously since its establishment to fund publishing and other activities of the ABSA.

His contribution in fields other than ornithology should also be mentioned. A tireless worker for his local church parish, Steve, and his wife Noni, have run what is loosely called the 'garden stall' which raised over \$115 000 during the last 12 years. Although they have now handed over the reigns for selling plants, which they used to do all year round from their backyard as well as at church fetes, they still propagate the plants, which are sold at the parish stall every weekend.

Steve is like many other amateur ornithologists who devote much of their own time and resources to studying birds and furthering their conservation. The ABSA is proud that one of its most active supporters has received recognition for his efforts and extends congratulations to Steve for this prestigious honour.

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