

New South Wales Albatross Study Group 1971 Season

Three hundred and thirty seven Wandering Albatrosses *Diomedea exulans* were caught during the season, bringing the total banded off the coast of New South Wales to 3,027.

Wandering Albatrosses and Giant Petrels *Macronectes spp.* were somewhat less numerous than in previous years. Consequently the results for the season were rather disappointing after the excellent figures achieved in 1970. The decline at Malabar has been attributed to the effect of the sewage treatment plant which is being installed at the Malabar outfall. During the past few years this plant has been progressively placed in service and has now almost entirely eliminated the large fatty substances, probably from abattoir disposal, which provided the main attraction in former years. One outing during an industrial dispute in September clearly indicated the effect; on that occasion, large quantities of untreated sewage apparently were released intermittently when the reduced plant capacity caused by the dispute was unable to cope with the demand. Messrs Battam and Jones stated that almost within minutes the number of albatrosses and giant petrels observed in the area increased noticeably; the birds disappeared again when conditions returned to normal.

On the other hand, the Austinmer station is a natural feeding area and is not affected like Malabar. However, the albatrosses were present in fewer numbers this season and although only two less outings (12 in 1971 and 14 in 1970), 273 were caught this season and 511 in 1970.

On 31 July the Sydney group with two launches operated with the Austinmer group off Austinmer-Bellambi. Weather conditions were not good and birds were far from plentiful. Certainly the increase from one to three teams operating is not likely to provide a corresponding increase in the number caught, as the one team, weather permitting, normally catches most birds in the area on the day.

The results are summarised in Table 1.

*S. G. (Bill) Lane,
65 Wood Street,
Lane Cove, N.S.W.*

TABLE 1
Summary of birds caught

	Wandering Albatross			Giant Petrel		
	Malabar	Austinmer	Total	Malabar	Austinmer	Total
Banded (previously unmarked birds)	39	150 ¹⁾	189	39 ²⁾	1	40
Retrapped (including repeat recoveries)	26	118	139 ³⁾			
New Recoveries (originally banded elsewhere)	2	4	5 ⁴⁾	3		3
Banded at other N.S.W. locations			4			
Total individuals caught	67	272	337	42	1	43
Outings	13	12	25			

¹⁾ Includes 13 birds banded by the Sydney group at Austinmer

²⁾ Includes *M. giganteus* and *M. halli*

³⁾ Includes 5 birds retrapped at both places

⁴⁾ Includes 1 bird recovered at both places