

REVIEWS

Seventeenth Annual Report of the Australian Bird-banding Scheme. July 1970 to June 1971 by D. Purchase, Division of Wildlife Research, Technical Paper No. 25, CSIRO (Melbourne) 1972.

In the period covered by this Report, 59565 birds of 394 species were banded, also there were 14515 recoveries of 249 species, including 7358 individuals which were recovered for the first time.

Since the Scheme started in 1953 the totals are 993755 birds banded of 699 species and 90109 individuals (9.1%) recovered on 154246 occasions. The figures above are quoted from Table 1 which sets out for each species the total numbers banded and recovered, both for the current year and also cumulative totals from commencement in 1953 to 1971.

Confusion could arise, for Australian readers of the Report, from the fact that by a coincidence the total of species banded under the Scheme, now 699, almost reaches the number of species listed in *The Official Checklist of the Birds of Australia* (Second Edition, 1926). It must be remembered that geographically the Scheme covers all Australian territories from New Guinea to Antarctica. This wide ranging area, of course, contains many species not listed in the localised Australian Checklist.

The total of birds banded during 1970-71, namely 59565, is 12872 less than the previous Report. There were substantial reductions in the numbers banded of several species, particularly of colonial nesters.

The Eastern Silvereye again provided the largest banding total, 6011. The Straw-necked Ibis was second, 4459—all nestlings. Other species of which more than 2000 were banded in 1970-71 are: Pied Cormorant 3979; Crested Terns 3712; Wedge-tailed Shearwater 3649; Short-tailed Shearwater; 2993 Black Cormorant 2278; and Stubble Quail 2228.

The 1970-71 recovery records of 14515 birds exceeded the previous Report by 1898. This includes birds recovered dead, and also those recovered alive—sometimes on more than one occasion—and released still wearing their bands.

The Author of the Report considers as highly gratifying the increase in recent years in the percentage of banded birds recovered in relation to the total of birds handled, i.e. all banding and recovery records. He points out, too, some incidental activities which may temporarily reverse this increase.

Table 2 sets out a Selected List of Recoveries reported since 1 July 1970. This Table 2 occupies 47 pages of the Report and is full of 'meat' for any reader interested in the life and movements of birds. The Author has provided a great wealth of annotations which enhance and bring to life the formal tabulations.

The four maps used to illustrate the movements of Short-tailed Shearwaters, White Ibis, Whistling Kites and Pied Currawongs immediately convey their meaning in a way which the same space covered with mere printed words could never achieve. It is hoped that this feature may be expanded.

Foreign recoveries during the year included shearwaters from the sea near Japan; giant petrels found in New Zealand and South America; 15 Wandering Albatrosses banded off the coast of New South Wales and recovered on the Crozet Islands, and a Sacred Kingfisher banded near Mudgee, N.S.W., which was recovered from the Trobriand Islands, Papua.

Long distance movements* within Australia reported during the year include: a Little Penguin, 309 miles; another one 167 miles; a Stubble Quail 424 miles; a Hoary-headed Grebe 360 miles; a Black Cormorant 540 miles; a Little Black Cormorant 350 miles; a Crested Tern 1040 miles; a White Ibis 1410 miles; a Straw-necked Ibis 1570 miles, and many more.

The Moulting Inquiry has produced to 9 November 1971 a total of 2500 completed cards returned to the Banding Office since December 1969. These comprise 1518 cards on 100 species of non-passerines, and 982 cards on 97 species of passerines. Some further details are given. In this initial stage the policy is to accept cards even if the birds for which they were compiled were not moulting or were only undertaking a partial moult of the body feathers.

Table 3 setting out Notable Longevity Records reported during 1970-71 expands the figures given last year for 20 species and lists 5 additional to those set out in the previous Report for 1969-70.

The Report's Introduction states that there were 119 active 'A' Class during 1970-71, an increase of 6 on the previous year. These were assisted by 62 'B' Class banders, the same as the previous year. The number of each class is listed by State or Territory. This makes it very plain that only a few banders are working in the northern half of the Continent. Clearly, the Scheme has a great deal of fundamental general fact-finding yet to do to provide a sound basis for planning later intensive study of individual species.

When discussing recoveries the Author sets out that the basic results of any bird banding organisation must be judged, not on the number of birds banded, but on that data obtained from subsequent recovery (alive or dead) or observation of banded birds. In *Banding News*, which is circulated privately to the Scheme's banders, he has emphasised that results of banding work will serve no useful purpose to ornithology unless they are made available to others and that this can only be done by documenting the results in an ornithological journal. He goes much further by adding that there are many people, including himself, who will help launch banders on their first publication. No doubt

it was a pleasure for him to list in this Report the titles and authors of 19 publications, relating in whole or in part to banding studies or techniques, which had appeared during 1970-71, and also that these bring the total since 1953 to 198 such results.

The Author is to be congratulated for setting out in his tabulations and introductory text a great wealth of vital information in a readily accessible form.

The value of the material to the users of this Report would be greatly enhanced if means could be found to compress the printing and distribution period so that the Report became available well within the year following its closing date.

J. S. ROBERTSON, Wellington Point, Qld.

The distances are in miles to conform with the Report.

NEW MEMBERS

Full Members:

BROADBENT, Dr J. A., 22 Boronia Parade, Lugarno, N.S.W.

TARBURTON, M. K., Biology Department, Carmel College, Carmel, W.A.

Associate Members:

BROWN, A. J., 4 Bunyana Avenue, Wahroonga, N.S.W.

HUGHES, T. H., 21 Hills Avenue, Epping, N.S.W.

Junior Members:

POPPIE, S., 34 Adeline Street, Faulconbridge, N.S.W.

Change of Status:

The following member, having been granted a banding permit, has become a Full Member.

CHIRGWIN, Miss A. E., 85 New Farm Road, West Pennant Hills, N.S.W.

Bird Banding Supplies

Although the supplier's prices for mist nets have risen, particularly for wader nets, currency changes have enabled the Association to retain existing prices for the present. The following are the prices for supplies stocked by the Mist Net Service of the Association.

Standard Mist Nets

Black terylene, 3-shelf, 11" diagonal mesh, lightweight thread.

20 ft x 9 ft \$ 6.80 30 ft x 9 ft \$ 9.25

40 ft x 9 ft \$11.75 60 ft x 9 ft \$16.30

Special Large 4-shelf Nets

Other specifications as for standard nets

30 ft x 12 ft \$12.15 40 ft x 12 ft \$15.60

Wader Nets

Black terylene, 3-shelf, 2" diagonal mesh, lightweight thread.

40 ft x 9 ft \$10.00 60 ft x 9 ft \$15.60

Duck Nets

Black terylene, 3-shelf, 3" mesh heavyweight thread.

60 ft x 9 ft \$12.00

Bulk Netting

Available in any desired length. Black terylene, no shelf strings, 11" mesh, lightweight thread, 3 ft high. Suitable for repairing nets, extending the height of nets, for single shelf work in heathland scrub, in grassland (for quail), along forest tracks with low undergrowth, or along swamp edges

Per 10 yards \$ 2.10

Note: Bulk netting is measured with the mesh stretched.

Repair Material

Thread—for net repair 65 cents per spool

—for shelf strings 65 cents per spool

Netting needles 25 cents each

Directions for repair are included in the publication *The Use of Mist Nets in Australia*, (CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research Technical Paper No. 8, 1965).

Pesola Spring Balances

50 g (long) ... \$8.75 300 g (long) ... \$8.75

Other sizes are made and although not stocked, they can be obtained on request within a few weeks. Prices are similar to those stocked.

Orders: Should be addressed to—

Mr S. J. Wilson, The Bird Banders' Association of Australia,

2 Scott Street, NARRABUNDAH, A.C.T. 2604.

Cheques should be made payable to the Association and money orders made payable at Canberra G.P.O. Banders are requested to remit 'cash' with order. Banders quote your CSIRO permit number; Victorian banders please also quote your State mist net permit number.

Postage: Nets and balances will be forwarded by registered mail; it is requested that postage be added to remittances to cover this cost, which is approximately 75 cents for one net or one balance and one dollar for two nets.

Note: All prices quoted are subject to 12½ per cent discount to financial Full Members (licensed banders) of The Bird Banders' Association of Australia.