

Progress Notes on the Banding of Bar-shouldered Doves and Crested Pigeons

ELLA PRATT

At the family farm at Reserve Creek near Murwillumbah, in north east New South Wales, both Bar-shouldered Doves *Geopelia humeralis* and Crested Pigeons *Ocyphaps lophotes* come every day to join in with the domestic fowls at feeding time. This opportunity has been utilised to take sample trappings for banding, when time permits, in an attempt to learn whether they show seasonal or other movements and something of their life expectancy etc. During the period 1964 to 1972 a total of 322 Bar-shouldered Doves (see Table 1) and 30 Crested Pigeons has been banded in this way.

Initially the birds were caught in a trap made from panels of wire netting about one metre square mounted on 10 gauge fencing wire frames and joined with binding wire at their contact points. This trap originated from John Liddy and is described in the *Aust. Bird Bander* 3:10. At the start it was used full size and in a permanent position. However, catches were relatively small and some trouble was experienced with birds going in to feed, then having difficulty in finding the outlets, even though these were left open unless the trap was under observation. Later, advantage was taken of its panel type construction to dismantle the large trap and re-assemble the panels into two easily movable smaller traps each one metre high, one metre wide and two metres long. These traps are floorless and have a funnel inlet at one end with a catching box at the other. This box has a clear glass wall at the distant end and a guillotine type drop door at the entry end adjacent to the trap outlet. By throwing the door lifting string over the top of the trap to the far end it is possible for one operator to work from there and chase the trapped birds into the gathering box. They are confined there by releasing the string and dropping the entry door behind them.

When the fowls are fed each day care is taken to put the wheat always in the same places. Then on trapping days, as soon as that day's ration is distributed, the trap is placed over the wheat at one of these regular feeding sites. The

birds go in without hesitation. After an hour or two the trap is removed and open feeding conditions are restored. The trap used in this way

TABLE 1
Annual handling tallies of individual Bar-shouldered Doves

Year (1)	Banded (2)	Recovered (3)	Total (4)
1964/65	66	0	66
1965/66	1	7	8
1966/67	2	1	3
1967/68	1	0	1
1968/69	7	2	9
1969/70	0	0	0
1970/71	1	0	1
1971/72	161	8	169
1972 ⁵	83	44	127
	322	62	384

1. Years are from 1 July to following 30 June.
2. New individuals banded during the year.
3. Retraps at the banding place of an individual banded there in any previous year; each bird is listed once only for the current year.
4. Total individuals handled during the year.
5. 1 July to 30 October 1972.

Note: These figures were affected not only by the number of birds available locally for trapping, but also by the amount of time and effort that could be allocated to trapping after other commitments.

TABLE 2

Recoveries of Bar-shouldered Doves
—at Banding Place

Band Number	Date Banded	Date Recovered	Notes
080-49809	29.10.64	26.11.64 27. 5.65 30. 9.72	7 years 11 months after banding. Band replaced with 080-03560.
080-49828	10.11.64	25. 5.65 15. 6.72	7 years 6 months 5 days after banding. The band was partly open and showed wear at the middle. It was replaced with a new band 080-91746.
080-49856	21. 5.65	1. 8.71 6.10.72	7 years 4 months 16 days. Band replaced with 080-03565.
080-49861	21. 5.65	23. 5.65 5. 9.72	7 years 3 months 15 days. Band in satisfactory condition.
080-49873	27. 5.65	2. 8.71 15. 6.72	7 years and 19 days. Band in good condition.
080-49839	1.12.64	31. 7.71 22. 8.71	6 years 8 months 21 days. Found injured, recovered and released on 26.8.71.
080-49891	27. 8.68	31. 7.71 11. 9.72	4 years and 15 days. Band out of shape and worn; replaced with 080-03527.
(03527)		30. 9.72	4 years 1 month 3 days.
080-49892	27. 8.68	5. 8.71	2 years 11 months 9 days.
080-49894	2. 9.68	30. 7.71	2 years 10 months 28 days
080-49897	21. 9.68	31. 7.71 5. 8.71	2 years 10 months 15 days.

Recoveries of Bar-shouldered Doves
—away from Banding Place

080-49838	1.12.64	Jan. 65	Shot at Pottsville Beach 2.7 km ESE of banding place, about one month after banding.
080-49812	24.10.64	7.12.66	Caught at Clothiers Creek, 1.6 km north of banding place. Released with band. 1 year 11 months 14 days.
080-49841	21.12.64	7.10.66	Report from Clothiers Creek, 1.6 km north of banding place. No other details. 1 year 9 months 14 days.

has proved most successful. However, the fowls, although providing good initial service as decoys, are occasionally a nuisance on trapping days. They tend to be not content with the open patches of wheat but want to get at all of it as usual. Thus they run around the trap squawking and pecking at the birds which are also trying to enter. Some of the more persistent fowls even try to push through the funnel entry. These attacks by the fowls sometimes cause panic amongst the birds both inside and outside the trap. When this happens it is found best to immediately collect the birds already within the trap and wait for those which are outside to return.

After three or four days of regular trapping the Doves show signs of trap shyness. The Crested Pigeons react much more quickly in this way. By avoiding trapping on consecutive days better results have been obtained for the time necessarily spent in supervising the trap when it is set to catch.

Early in September 1972 it was noticed that the Bar-shouldered Doves had started going into a chicken run in which there is a shed. It was found that if the doors of the shed were left open these doves walked in readily. Then by closing the doors the birds were easily caught in the shed. Utilising this procedure 66 new doves were banded and almost as many retraps made during the next month.

TABLE 3

Recoveries of Crested Pigeons

Band Number	Date Banded	Date Recovered	Notes
At Banding Place			
080-79955	4. 8.71	18. 6.72	10 months 14 days after banding. Released with band.
080-79952	31. 7.71	2. 4.72	Found dead 9 months 2 days after banding.
080-49843	6. 1.65	18. 6.65	5 months 12 days after banding. Released with band.
080-91784	13. 6.72	21. 6.72	Found 8 days after banding, badly injured and destroyed. This was a young bird about 8 weeks out of the nest.
Away from Banding Place			
080-79957	21. 2.72	21. 3.72	Found injured (destroyed) at Mooball Beach Road, about 13 km SE of banding place.

Progress reports to date are inconclusive but the bandings and re-trappings suggest that much of the Bar-shouldered Dove population is rather more nomadic than strictly sedentary. For example, during 1971 there were 88 new doves banded but only 18 of these were retrapped at the banding site during the first eight months of 1972. More recoveries away from the banding place are needed before any pattern of their movement can be demonstrated.

Some of the more interesting recoveries of Bar-shouldered Doves are set out in Table 2. All these birds were banded as adults and except the last three were retrapped at the banding place. Although scanty, the Crested Pigeon recovery data is listed in Table 3.

(Miss) E. K. Pratt,
Reserve Creek,
Murwillumbah, N.S.W.



• Crested Pigeon (Juvenile)

Photo: A. J. Elliott

Dominican Gull —An Early Sighting

In the *Aust. Bird Bander*, 9:60, the sighting of a Dominican Gull *Larus dominicanus* near Botany Bay, New South Wales in January 1943 was stated to be the second record for Australia and apparently the first for N.S.W. and the eastern coast.

Although it was the first published record, two of these birds were seen by me at Morna Point near Port Stephens, N.S.W. on 15 January 1938. My boatman friend, Mr Alf Mitchell saw them first while we were chasing marlin and they were quite close for easy identification when I saw them later. Then on 22 January 1939, two were seen off Newcastle and subsequently I have observed them near Port Stephens on a number of occasions.

A. F. D'Ombra, 17 Nillo Street, Lorn, N.S.W.