Recent Literature

BANDING and RECOVERY REPORTS

Long Point Bird Observatory Ten Year Report. 1970. Long Point Bird Observatory, Ontario, Canada. 66 pp.

The Long Point Bird Observatory was the first observatory established in North America. It was initiated by the Ontario Bird Banding Association but became an independent organization in 1968. Since 1965, a full time warden has been employed for seven months each year, and greater emphasis is now placed on specific research projects. In the ten years to 1969, some 106,400 birds of 224 species have been banded and banding totals for each year (and totals for the ten year period) are tabulated. Returning birds (viz. birds retrapped or shot in the banding area at least three months after banding) are tabulated by species; the total of only 409 returns from over 100,000 banded birds is minute by Australian banding area standards, and reflects differences between basically migratory populations in Ontario and basically sedentary populations in Australia. Studies of nesting birds have intensified in recent years, and over 100 nests are recorded annually as part of the Ontario Nest Record Scheme; ten year totals are 598 nests of 43 species. Nocturnal migrants are observed and sampled at the Long Point lighthouse, where large numbers of disorientated migrants are attracted to the light in certain weather conditions. In the ten years, some 6,800 birds have been killed at the lighthouse, including over 2,000 on the night of 26-27 September 1962. Over 100 have been killed on eleven nights.

Twelve pages of bar charts graph the occurrence of species in the area on a ten day basis throughout the year; the maximum numbers of each species observed in one day in spring and autumn are also tabulated. The various projects in operation (or completed) at the observatory are briefly summarized; some of these have been mentioned above . . . others include comparison of Heligoland traps and mist-nets; change in status and migration of several species; migrating birds as transport hosts for arboviruses; bat, dragonfly, and Wanderer butterfly movements; energy requirements of migratory flight; bird diseases etc. Numbers of recoveries (870; of dead, dying or retrapped away from the banding site) are tabulated for each species and recovery locations of all species are shown on 18 maps which occupy 11 pages. No indication of banding and recovery dates, or of method of recovery, is given. In the reviewer's opinion this space would have been far better used to tabulate full banding and recovery data of the birds; this is not done "since many of these recoveries have been recorded in previous annual reports". A pity.

Species observed on the annual Christmas Bird Count since 1961 are tabulated. Publications based on the observatory activities are listed, and the use of the observatory in biological education is briefly discussed.

ANALYTICAL STUDIES

Post-juvenile Dispersal of Night Herons in Malaya. Lord Medway and Richard P. Lim. 1970. *Bird-banding*, 41: 265-274.

Between 1964 and 1968, 7,450 nestlings of the Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* were banded at a colony in Perak, Malaya. Fifty-five birds have been recovered, all from within Malaya. Half of the recoveries were within 40 miles of the banding site, and 75% were from within 50 miles; longest movement recorded was 262 miles. Over half of the recoveries occurred within three months of banding and 84% within six months. Only four birds were recovered after one year, and the longest elapsed time was 48 months. An appendix tabulates banding and recovery data of all recovered birds.

Banding Recoveries of the Blackpoll Warbler. I. C. T. Nisbet. 1970. *Bird-banding*, 41: 279-281.

Over 43,000 Blackpoll Warblers *Dendroica striata* have been banded in North America, and only eight have been recovered (retraps at banding sites are excluded). Full data of seven of these recoveries are given, and these are discussed.

The Sex-ratio for the Red-winged Blackbird. Harold E. Burtt and Maurice L. Glitz. 1970. *IBBA News*, 42: 83-85.

Of 68,248 Red-winged Blackbirds *Agelaius phoeniceus*, caught in decoy traps at Columbus, Ohio, 75.2% were males. This compares with between 69% and 84% as indicated by other studies (some from relatively small samples). There are marked monthly variations in the sex ratio—two high points of about 90% in February and March are attributed to early return of males from migration—reason for low points of about 50% in April and May is obscure—from June to December the ratio varies between 70% and 90%.

A Note on Measurements of the Harrier *Circus approximans*. A. L. K. Carroll. 1970. *Notornis*, 17: 320-321.

Sampling of the Harriers (= Swamp Harrier of Australia) in New Zealand gave measurements and weights of 61 males and 70 females. An excess of females, particularly from December to February, is indicated from the numbers sampled at this time (40 females; 22 males) but the need for confirmatory data is stressed.

TECHNIQUES

Ruby-throated Hummingbird Studies. James C. Johnson. 1970. *IBBA News*, 42: 86-91, 132-133.

Various drop and tube type feeders for dispensing sugar-water mixture to hummingbirds are described and illustrated. The second part of the paper gives instructions for taming the birds so that they will feed while perched on a hand. The feeders and taming techniques would probably be equally applicable to small Australian honeyeaters and silvereyes in some circumstances.

Another Way to Weigh a Bird. Arthur J. Wiseman. 1970. *IBBA News*, 42: 136-139.

Banders have used many types of containers for holding birds while they are being weighed. The present paper advocates an inverted cone of stiff cardboard (held in a wire frame) in which the bird is held in a head-down position. The gear illustrated is intended for use on a pan balance, but it could easily be adapted to a spring balance.

Beitrag zur Methodik des Flugelmessens. H. Kelm. 1970. *J. Orn., LPZ.*, 111 (3/4): 482-494. (In German with English summary).

Different techniques in measuring the wings of birds have led to results that are not comparable when obtained by different ornithologists. Deciding factors are whether the wing is measured in a bent or straightened position, and whether the convexity of the wing is removed by flattening it down to the scale. Only the maximum wing measurement of a newly dead or living bird can be regarded as constant, and it can be obtained with safety by different research workers working independently of each other. It is achieved by complete straightening of the two digital joints and the simultaneous pressing down of the wing to the scale, so that its front from the bend to the tip is parallel to the edge of the scale. OTTO KLEINSCHMIDT pioneered this measuring method and in order to distinguish his method clearly from those used by others, it is suggested it be named after him.

In skins, the maximum fresh wing measurement is irreproducible as the wing dries up in the bent position. However, it is approximately obtained by following the principle of straightening as mentioned above. Differences of proportion in the wing structure of different bird orders as well as different techniques of taxidermists result in deviations from the constant fresh measurement.

To obtain better opportunities of comparison than hitherto, it seems necessary that research workers should state which measuring techniques they use.

MISCELLANEOUS

A Radar Study of the Altitude on Nocturnal Passerine Migration. Kenneth P. Able. 1970. *Bird-banding*, 41: 282-290.

Autumnal nocturnal migration of passerines was studied by radar in Louisiana, U.S.A. Most migrants travel at relatively low altitudes (90% below 5,000 feet; 75% below 3,000 feet), with very small numbers as high as 9,000 to 11,000 feet. From exodus shortly after sunset, the birds climb rapidly and most reach maximum altitudes during the first hour, and the height distribution falls gradually after the second hour. During solid overcast conditions no attempt was made to rise above the clouds.

Northerly Movement of Silvereyes in Winter on the West Coast of the South Island. Peter Grant. 1970. *Notornis*, 17: 322-323.

Northwards flights of silvereyes along the coastal strip near Greymouth, New Zealand between 2 and 22 June 1970 are briefly described. It is estimated that about 8,000 birds passed on each of two particular days.

REVIEWS

Kookaburras, by Veronica A. Parry. Lansdowne Press Pty Ltd, Melbourne, 1970. 110 pp., 6 colour photographs, 36 black and white photographs, 3 half tone reproductions of old plates, 1 map, 2 line drawings, 6 diagrams. Price A$4.25.

This book on a familiar Australian, the Kookaburra, is the result of two and a half years research for the Author's M.Sc. Degree requirements at Monash University, Melbourne. The book commences with a brief history and zoogeography. Miss Parry is probably correct in assuming that, "The Kookaburra's ancestors, members of the genus *Dacelo*, came from New Guinea." However, her reasoning for this, should have been given. Plumage and ageing characters are discussed in some detail and it is stated that in the majority of cases the two sexes are identical; however sometimes males develop a bright blue rump. If the skin on the right hand side of the colour plate illustrating differences between sexes represents an individual with bright blue rump, then, on the basis of accurately sexed skins, I mention that females occasionally develop such bright blue rumps. Perhaps the blue rump is a character gradually gained with age.

Using patagial tags the author was able to sort out the social system of kookaburras; she found that they resided in well-defined territories which may contain a single permanently mated pair or a family group consisting of a mated pair and one or more auxiliary members. Auxiliaries are non-breeding adult birds whose capacity to breed is suppressed by their subordinate position within the family hierarchy. Auxiliaries aid in territory defence, incubation of eggs, feeding and protection of young. Such helpers at the nest are known for a number of other species of birds.

Size and function of territory are discussed. With kookaburras, territory size is lined with the auxiliary system and thus affects the population dynamics. Territorial behaviour acts through sociality in controlling the reproductive potential of the population.

Kookaburras have seven types of calls, and the function of the famous laughing song is to advertise territorial ownership.

Different postures and behaviour are described for fear, camouflage, roosting, feeding, courtship and territorial defence. Breeding biology, mortality and predation are described in two chapters and in the last intriguing chapter titled "Why have auxiliaries?" the author examines her findings in the light of various theories on population control.

The book is well written and the illustrations for the most part adequate. This study of kookaburras is of sufficient depth to merit the attention of the most hardened vertebrate zoologist yet presented in such a manner as to make fascinating reading for the layman only remotely interested in birds. To sum up, it is one of the finest books on a single species of bird that I have ever read.

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