

Flock Constancy with Striated Thornbills

S. J. Wilson (1965) recorded constancy in flocks of Striated Thornbills *Acanthiza lineata* at his banding site at Lees Creek Road, Brindabella Ranges, A.C.T. and requested details from banders having similar experiences. He caught a flock of 12 Striated Thornbills on 2 January 1965, including five which had been banded together at the same place on 3 November 1962.

At my banding site at Munghorn Gap, 22 miles east of Mudgee, N.S.W. (described previously—Morris, 1967) Striated Thornbills are moderately common birds of the forest canopy. However as netting sites are at waterholes, the chance of trapping these birds is slight. Banding commenced at Munghorn Gap in September 1965 but it was not until 27 May 1966, that I trapped Striated Thornbills. On that occasion a flock of six was caught in a net located between several *Acacia botrycephala* near a waterhole and the birds were banded with band numbers 011-80298 to 011-80303.

On 19 May 1967 a flock of these birds seen near the banding site, included some with bands but none of the flock was caught. At the same netting site on 20 December 1967, one of the original group (band number 011-80299) banded on 27 May 1966 was retrapped with an unbanded bird. Nearly 2½ years later, on 20 September 1970, about 200 yards from the original site, a flock of 14 Striated Thornbills was caught in a net set among eucalypts and callitris. The flock included two of the six birds banded on the 27 May 1966, over four years previously. The band numbers of the retrapped birds were 011-80298 and 011-80301.

Then on 15 June 1971, at a third site in the same area and also about 200 yards from the first location, a flock of eight Striated Thornbills was netted. The flock included four of the original birds, numbers 011-80298, 011-80299, 011-80301 and 011-80303, now more than five years after banding.

Twenty-two Striated Thornbills have been banded at Munghorn Gap in six years and seven of these have been retrapped ten times. The banded birds would represent only a small proportion of the total population of the species in the 9,000 acres of the Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve. The small number banded and the related retrap data indicate that Striated Thornbills have a long lifespan*, stay together in the same small flock and probably the flock restricts itself to a permanent territory. It is remarkable that four of the original six birds were still together as part of the same flock more than five years after banding.

References

- Morris, A. K. (1967), 'Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters in the Mudgee District', *Aust. Bird Bander*, 5:53-54.
Wilson, S. J. (1965), 'Constancy in Flocks of Thornbills', *Aust. Bird Bander*, 3:47.

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* For this species the longest elapsed time from date of banding to the latest recovery (shown as "oldest" in Recovery Round-up) is over 9 years 2 months—see Recovery Round-up, vol. 9, no. 3, page 67.—Hon. Editor.

Bird Banding Supplies

Present prices for mist nets and spring balances are set out in vol. 9, no. 3, page 68 (September, 1971).