

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

061-52726. Male banded by A. W. J. Fletcher at Bellerive, Tas. on 25 Apr. 85. "Trapped accidentally in trap for terrestrial animals" (died) at Tranmere, Tas. in May 86. 5 km SE.

Grey Shrike-thrush *Colluricincla harmonica*

050-52908. Banded by P. Jackson at Somers Camp, Vic. on 19 Aug. 80. "Band number read in field" at Balnarring Beach, Vic. on 14 Sept. 86, over 6 years after banding. 4 km NW.

Varied Sittella *Daphoenositta chrysoptera*

012-76133. Adult male banded by B. R. Hutchins at Sandy Creek, SA on 25 June 79. Recaptured at banding place on 25 May 86, over 5 years 11 months after banding. (This is the oldest recorded for this species.)

Yellow-faced Honeyeater *Lichenostomus chrysops*

022-26564. Banded by R. G. Cameron at Balnarring, Vic. on 21 July 84. "Collided with a window" at Rosebud, Vic. on 20 Oct. 86. 20 km W.

Singing Honeyeater *Lichenostomus virescens*

030-46820. Banded by S. J. Ambrose on Rottnest Island, WA on 5 July 81. Recaptured at banding site by D. A. Saunders on 19 Feb. 84.

White-plumed Honeyeater *Lichenostomus penicillatus*

023-46907. Banded by D. C. Paton at Gilberton, SA on 13 Apr. 86. Found dead at Glenalta, SA on 22 July 86. 11 km S.

New Holland Honeyeater *Phylidonyris novaehollandiae*

(a) 031-61587. Banded by N. Forde at Aldinga Scrub Conservation Park, SA on 7 Oct. 84. Found dead at Aldinga Beach, SA on 10 Sept. 86. 2 km NW.

(b) 031-67994. Male banded by D. C. Paton at Braendlers Scrub near Monarto, SA on 8 May 83. Recaptured near banding place by B. A. Foreman on 29 May 86.

(c) 032-68124. Banded by B. R. Hutchins near Sandy Creek, SA on 25 May 86. "Killed by cat" at Tea Tree Gully, SA on 22 Nov. 86. 21 km S.

(d) 032-72464. Banded by D. C. Paton at Seaford, SA on 1 Jan. 86. Recovered at Port Noarlunga, SA on 28 Mar. 86. 5 km NNE.

(e) 032-88152. Banded by T. J. Bradley at Hale Conservation Park, SA on 19 July 86. Recovered "inside a building (released alive)" near Belair National Park, Blackwood, SA on 2 Oct. 86. 43 km SSW.

White-checked Honeyeater *Phylidonyris nigra*

032-87465. Banded by G. D. Bell at Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Gardens, near St. Ives, NSW on 22 June 86. "Killed by cat" at St. Ives, NSW on 3 Nov. 86. 6 km SSW.

Eastern Spinebill *Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*

(a) 013-20479. Male banded by D. Milledge at Belongil Creek, Byron Bay, NSW on 20 June 85. Recaptured at Belongil Woods Motel, Byron Bay, NSW by J. T. Willows on 31 July 85. 1 km W.

(b) 013-43063. Male banded by H. F. Recher at Brisbane Water National Park, NSW on 20 Apr. 83. "Colour marking sighted in field (band number inferred)" at Mountain Lagoon, near Kurrajong, NSW in Dec. 85. 62 km W.

(c) 014-40241. Male banded by H. F. Recher at Brisbane Water National Park, NSW on 12 June 85. Recovered ("hit by car") near Gosford, NSW by G. Logan on 4 Sept. 86. 15 km NNE.

(d) 014-54253. Female banded by S. G. Lane at Moonee, via Coffs Harbour, NSW on 19 July 86. "Killed by cat" at Coffs Harbour, NSW on 16 Aug. 86. 9 km S.

(e) 014-99792. Juvenile female banded by T. J. Bradley at Cromer Conservation Park, SA on 2 Feb. 86. Recaptured near Sandy Creek, SA on 21 June, 86. 25 km NW.

Review

Bander's Aid by K. A. and D. Rogers. Published by A. Rogers, St. Andrews. Price A\$20.00 from Author.

The idea of a practical guide to the aging and sexing of Australian birds is a good one as it will help to provide information which when properly analysed will give us a better understanding of their biology. The greater part of the 137 pages of this guide is devoted to the descriptions of 112 bush birds mainly from Victoria.

After an introductory chapter, chapter 2 describes the formats used in the species descriptions. These descriptions are set out under headings identified as "parts" 1-9, yet the descriptions themselves are not so numbered. Some re-arrangement of the information under Part 8 (sexing criteria) might be better placed in Part 6,

("sexing"). It would be preferable to eliminate this division into "parts" and adopt simple headings as used in the descriptions themselves. Chapter 3 discusses the information to be recorded and describes with illustrations the methods and techniques for taking measurements. In Figure 1 the drawing of the whole bird which illustrates the topography of a bird is incorrect; the area shown for the scapulars is that of the lesser coverts. The scapulars which are not figured are the feathers on the shoulder, not on the wing. In Figure 4 there is a reference to colour, e.g. Maroon 31 and Burnt Sienna 135, but there is no mention of the colour standards used. Chapter 4 lists some of the precautions that should be taken to ensure the birds remain unharmed. Chapter 5 gives descriptions of the species with age and sex characters.

The authors several times in the text point out the limitations of their data as nearly all of it relates to the birds they themselves caught and handled in Victoria.

This is why the book fails to be a reliable aid to sexing and aging the birds described. In many cases the number of birds caught is too small to enable reliable conclusions to be drawn; in 21 species only 6 specimens or less were caught. The authors have also failed to fully examine the published literature. Although *Bird in the Hand*, editor S. G. Lane, 1974 is acknowledged in the references the authors do not appear to have made full use of it or indicated where any of their findings differ.

Sacred Kingfisher *Halcyon sancta*

Adult (1+) is described as having white tips to the secondary coverts. This means it is a first year bird still retaining the juvenile coverts as a full adult or bird which has completed its first post breeding moult does not have white tips to the coverts. Apparently all the adults caught were first year birds.

Grey Shrike-thrush *Colluricincla harmonica*

Here the aging is stated to be based on Disney 1974 and confirmed by the authors own observations. However, under Sexing they do not give the most obvious field character separating Adult males and females. Males have a dark ring round the eye of dark grey feathers and the females have a white ring.

Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx basalis*

Two birds caught the same day had different eye colours, pink brown and fawn grey and it is suggested this may be a sexing character (Perry de Rebeira) pers. comm.). This is correct and was published in the first edition of the Reader's Digest complete Book of Australian Birds (1976). The male has the red eye and the female the grey eye.

Eastern Spinebill *Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*

The juvenile is not described although it has been well documented and illustrated.

These few examples show that unfortunately this book is a Band Aid rather than a Bander's Manual. It would have been improved by tighter editing. For example, the word ECLIPSE does not mean post breeding as it is used here, but the special eclipse plumage as found in some male Anatidae. Cloaca protuberance does not refer to the shape of the cloaca, but to the bulge behind the cloaca in some male birds which can be used to sex birds in the breeding season. It is formed by seminal vesicles in which the sperm are stored enlarging during the breeding season. In bright blue Superb Fairy-wrens this seems to be all the time.

This book is valuable as a guide to methods and techniques for taking measurements, examining moult and on understanding the statistics used. The data given under the species descriptions need treating with caution. The authors do not properly distinguish juveniles from immatures and often the description of the immature is that of the juvenile. This problem emphasises the lack of detailed descriptions for all plumages of Australian birds. Many people, including myself, have in the past considered these to be unnecessary if good illustrations were available, however, this book has shown that this is not so. It becomes more important than ever that the

projected RAOU Handbook gives adequate descriptions of all plumage type to fulfil this need.

This book can be obtained from the publisher A. Rogers, Lot 17, Ninks Road, St. Andrews, Victoria, Australia, 3761.

H.J.deS.D.

Obituary — Gavin Johnstone

Members will be saddened to hear of the recent death of Dr Gavin Johnstone. Gavin has been a member of the Editorial Advisory Panel of *Corella* since 1977.

Gavin took his Ph.D. at the University of Aberdeen and since coming to Australia his ornithological interests have largely centred around seabirds. His studies on the biology of Giant-Petrels on Macquarie Island are well known; less so are his contributions to many ornithological studies of the last decade and his stands on environmental issues.

He frequently led expeditions in Antarctica for the Antarctic Division and his successful visit to MacDonal Island near Heard Island was an ornithological highlight. His gentlemanly manner and ever willingness to help with enquiries will be much missed. To his wife, Kate and young family we extend our sympathy.

M.D.M.

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