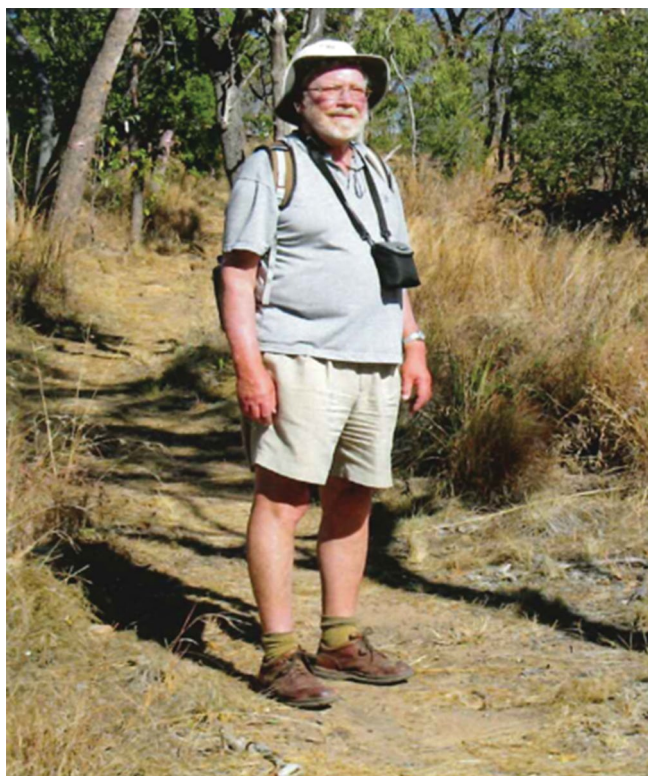


OBITUARY



DAVID PURCHASE (1934 –2015)

Secretary, Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme 1967-1984

David (Dave) Purchase was an unassuming and gentle man who will be best remembered by the Australian ornithological world as a meticulous administrator and a strong supporter of amateur researchers and bird banders in particular.

For Australian bird and bat banders during 20 years from the 1960s to the 1980s Dave was the bird and bat banding scheme. His calm ways and methodical administration saw the fledgling organisation he took over in 1967 have two million banded birds recorded by 1984 with about 10 percent of these being re-traps,

The Australian Bird Banding Scheme began officially in 1953 as a technical service run by the CSIRO in collaboration with the State and Territory fauna authorities while the Australian Bat Banding Scheme was officially launched by the CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research in 1960.

David Purchase came to Australia from the UK as a single young man on the SS Largs Bay. He first worked on a farm at Richmond near Sydney. The fledgling town of Canberra needed young workers so Dave moved and joined CSIRO in 1957. Here his first job was with the 'rabbit team'. He developed an interest in caving and joined the newly formed Canberra Speleologists. The first bats banded in Australia were in 1957. Dave, the naturalist, combined his caving interests and started banding bats at Wee Jasper in 1958.

In 1960 Dave wrote the first (of many subsequent) Annual Report of the Australian Bat Banding Scheme. In that year the Bird and Bat Banding Schemes were combined and managed together.

In 1962 Dave resigned from the Wildlife Section in Canberra and was appointed as a Biologist with the Australian National Antarctic Research Expeditions (ANARE), and spent a total of 29 months, between December 1962 and March 1966, on Macquarie Island. Here he worked on the Royal Penguin – a long-term population study involving a large-scale banding programme. He also took the opportunity to study aspects of population regulation in the Southern Skua.

On returning to Canberra from the sub-Antarctic, Dave was to commence a career that he would follow for the rest of his working life. Dr Harry Frith, the doyen of Australian wildlife research and Chief of the CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research, recognised Dave's particular skills and appointed him Secretary of the Australian Bird-banding and Bat-banding Scheme (ABBS) on January 1, 1967.

The unassuming Dave committed himself to the meticulous task of the Secretary of ABBS for almost two decades. To Dave, in the way public service was viewed in his day, he saw his appointment as Secretary of the ABBS an honour and privilege. It was not a stepping stone to the next job or a line on a CV.

The Secretary's role was not without its challenges. It is easy to look at today's mature scheme and underestimate the challenges of its creation.

Firstly, there were the technical issues of band design, manufacture and supply. Then there were the administrative tasks of record keeping (pre- and then post-computers) and logistics. And of course there was the business of managing the multitude of personalities involved in bird and bat research. These ranged nationally from the professional scientists, some with little knowledge of birds, to the enthusiastic amateurs. What a theatre!

Dave's diplomatic skills were partly the reason we now have one national banding scheme. In the early days, state authorities were going their own way. We could easily have had a plethora of banding schemes across the continent in the various states and institutions. Federation has some virtues.

In 1984, the CSIRO transferred the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Schemes (ABBBS) to the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service (ANPWS). While Dave had the opportunity to transfer with the ABBBS to the public service agency he chose to step aside. After starting with the infant scheme 24 years earlier and running from 1967 he felt that working in a new organisation was not for him.

As a budding 16 year old birdo living in the ACT in 1970, I became a licensed (B Class) bird bander and had the great good fortune to be able to have easy access to the machine room of the Australian Bird-banding and Bat banding Scheme at CSIRO

Wildlife Research in Canberra. I was able to benefit from Dave's unstinting encouragement. It was Dave's encouragement of inexperienced banders that energised the scheme and gave so many young would-be ornithologists their professional or amateur start.

Whilst I was a bird bander, it was through Dave's contributions through Canberra Ornithologist Group (COG) that I really got to know him. I knew Dave in the earliest years of COG (then an RAOU Branch). Dave was in Macquarie Island when COG was formed in 1964 but he became actively involved in 1967. I joined in 1970. The fledgling club started a journal in 1968, the Canberra Bird Notes (CBN) and Dave was its first editor. Ten years later, I was editor and as always found Dave's advice and encouragement sound and freely given.

Last year, in Dave's eightieth year, COG celebrated its 50th anniversary. There were a lot of different activities and one was the production of an anniversary edition of the CBN. Dave wrote a history of the Canberra RAOU Branch for the 1964-2014 CBN 50th anniversary issue. This contribution is a wonderful legacy to Dave's attention to detail, word craft and meticulous record keeping. The article and the issue are

significant historic records in the life of Canberra and its birds in the second half of the 20th century.

For me, Dave was the passionate ornithologist, bird recorder, editor, bird club companion and eager sharer of information with young people. Many younger amateur and professional ornithologists today are the better for his long-term unselfish support.

Life is lived in many parts, and while here I have addressed Dave's professional contribution, I recognise that Dave's greatest pride was his family. I acknowledge Dave's life partner the late Shirley, their daughter Robin, grand children Anton and Marissa and son-in-law Frank.

Dave loved words. I hope these words do credit to a life well-lived.

It is a mark of Dave's life-long passion that his family elected to have donations in respect of Dave's passing be made to the Canberra Birds Conservation Fund

Neil Hermes

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RECOVERY ROUND-UP

This section is prepared with the co-operation of the Secretary, Australian Bird and Bat Banding Schemes, Australian Nature Conservation Agency. The recoveries are only a selection of the thousands received each year; they are not a complete list and should not be analysed in full or part without prior consent of the banders concerned. Longevity and distance records refer to the ABBBS unless otherwise stated. The distance is the shortest distance in kilometres along the direct line joining the place of banding and recovery; the compass direction refers to the same direct line. (There is no implication regarding the distance flown or the route followed by the bird). Where available ABBBS age codes have been included in the banding data.

Recovery or longevity items may be submitted directly to me whereupon their merits for inclusion will be considered.

Hon. Editor

The following abbreviations appear in this issue:

AWSG - Australasian Wader Study Group.
SOSSA - Southern Ocean Seabird Study Group.
VWSG - Victorian Wader Study Group.

Common Bronzewing *Phaps chalcoptera*

090-48745. Adult (1+) female banded by R. P. Allen at Dixon Property, 15 km SW of Grenfell, NSW on 9 Mar. 2003. Recaptured, released alive with band at banding place on 14 Mar. 2009, over 6 years after banding.

(This is the oldest recorded for the species.)

Peaceful Dove *Geopelia striata*

062-20460. Adult (2+) banded by the Broome Bird Observatory at Coconut Well, 10 km N of Broome, WA on 4 Oct. 1992. Recaptured, released alive with band at banding place four times the last occasion on 4 Jun. 2011, over 18 years 8 months after banding.

(This is the oldest recorded for the species.)

Wonga Pigeon *Leucosarcia picata*

100-31304. Immature (1) banded by G. J. Logan at Townsend near Maclean, NSW on 28 Aug. 1998. Recaptured, released alive with band at banding place on 4 Aug. 2008, over 9 years, 11 months after banding.

(This is the oldest recorded for the species.)

Great-winged Petrel *Pterodroma macroptera*

083-15132. Adult (1+) banded by SOSSA at sea off Tomakin, NSW (35° 50' 00"S 150° 15' 00"E) on 9 Feb 2003. Recaptured, released alive with band on East Island, New Island, New Zealand (37° 41' 00"S 178° 35' 00"E) on 8 Apr. 2011, over 8 years, 2 months after banding. 2523 km E.

(This is the longest movement recorded for the species.)

Eastern Osprey *Pandion cristatus*

280-14940, plus coloured metal band LBlue. Nestling, male banded by G. P. Clancy south of the Broadwater, Clarence River, NSW on 1 Nov. 2001. Band number read in field (bird not trapped) at Ulladulla, NSW on 8 Apr. 2016, over 14 years, 5 months after banding. 701 km SSW.