

MOVEMENT PATTERNS OF GREAT, INTERMEDIATE AND LITTLE EGRETS FROM AUSTRALIAN BREEDING COLONIES

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The current state of knowledge about the movements of Great, Intermediate and Little Egrets from Australian breeding colonies is reviewed using published work, data provided by the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme and the records of Project Egret Watch at the Shortland Wetlands Centre. The limited data available suggest that the three egret species undertake movements to all points of the compass but that inland birds tend to move north towards Queensland and New Guinea. Data from the coastal colonies in New South Wales indicate that fledglings disperse to foraging and night roosting locations on the floodplain where the colony is situated, before embarking on long-distance migration. Long-distance movements (up to 3 000 km) soon after fledging have been recorded from colonies in coastal and inland New South Wales and Western Australia. There is some evidence that a seasonal migration between nesting colonies and wintering locations may take place for at least some birds originating from coastal colonies.