

NOT THIS LITTLE BLACK DUCK

During 1991 I individually banded 14 Pacific Black Ducks in the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney with two more being banded in 1995, a total of 16 birds. I would have thought that 'garden' ducks would have tended to stay at home but to date there have been four dead recoveries recorded from the banded population (25%). Each has been a different story:

1. The first recovery (Band No. 110-89835) was recovered dead at the Seal Enclosure, Taronga Zoo, Sydney on 2 July 1991 (taken by wild mammal species?), 2 km NE.
2. The second recovery (Band No. 110-89854) was from Violet Town, Victoria on 1 Sept. 1994, with the bird being recovered dead on the highway/road (probably hit by motor vehicle), 583 km SW.
3. The third (Band No. 110-89842) was recovered dead on Mrs Macquaries Road, Sydney on 24 Sept. 1998, hit by motor vehicle, 1 km E.
4. The fourth recovery (Band No. 110-89853) was *band only recovered* at Australia Zoo, Beerwah, Queensland on 2 Oct. 1999, 799 km N.

There was a note from David Drynan, Project Officer, Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme added to the Report of Recovery to Bander. It stated that

"This band was found at the bottom of the Alligator Pond!! One of the resident alligators was transported from Taronga Zoo to Beerwah in 1997 — there is a possibility (v. small) that the band was transported inside the Alligator!!!"

This must be the only band recovery attributed to an Alligator in Australia, and it demonstrates that both roads and zoos are not safe places for Pacific Black Ducks that are used to the safety of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney.

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BOOK REVIEW

Emperor The Magnificent Penguin.

Pauline Reilly, 1998 Kangaroo Press Pty Ltd.

An imprint of Simon and Schuster Australia, P.O. Box 507, East Roseville 2069. RRP \$9.95.

The book has 32 pages with 48 colour photographs. The text is in a font which is larger than usual for a natural history book, and is thus suitable for reading by upper primary and lower secondary students as well, of course, by anyone interested in the life history of penguins.

This lovely book would make an excellent addition to any bird lover's shelf, and also to any children's library!

The photographs are truly magnificent and convey the magnificence of the penguins and the entire landscape in which they live. Contributions to the photographs are made by well-known Antarctic Division scientists including G. Robertson and D. Murray, R. Kirkwood and K. Green and Dr Barbara Wienecke helped with the information for the text.

The story follows 'Emperor', an adult male Emperor Penguin *Aptenodytes forsteri*, through his life for a year, starting in March, right at the beginning of the breeding season. At each step, Pauline relates the behaviour of 'Emperor' to the stage of his breeding cycle and to the conditions in the Antarctic winter. The story is written in a, easy-to-read yet factually correct style. This style no doubt is intended to make the life history accessible to younger readers than might usually read the life history of such an animal.

Pauline succeeds in astounding the reader with the details of the penguin's life, especially the hardships of breeding and the outstanding endurance of this animal. One cannot but help wonder how any animal could withstand the rigours of an Antarctic winter, as does the breeding male, while huddling with an egg balanced on its feet, in a colony with other breeding males.

But beware — the photographs are so beautiful that like me, you may want to experience them for yourself!

Let us hope that through such well-written and presented stories as these, children may have an increased wonder and appreciation of this magnificent world. As Pauline says in the closing sentence, "... it is up to us to see that this magnificent penguin does not suffer through our greed, neglect and stupidity."

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DELAYED REPORTING OF A BANDING RECOVERY

I can improve on the delay in reporting the recovery of a banded bird 19 years later (Lane, S. G., 1999, *Corella* 23(2): 32).

Moreau, *The Palaearctic African Bird Migration Systems*, and Elgood, *The Birds of Nigeria*, credit me with ringing several thousand Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* in central Nigeria during the early 1960s. One individual (8652),

ringed in Vom, Nigeria on 17 November 1965, was recovered in Lithuania in July-September 1966. The Russian ringing authorities did not advise R. E. Sharland (Co-ordinator of the Nigerian Ringing Scheme) of this recovery until early 1997 (*Malimbus* 19(2): 103) — Yes, over 30 years! Perhaps they have 'very old scientific workers' in Lithuania.

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