

THE IMPACT OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT ON BIRD COMMUNITIES OF THREE VICTORIAN TOWNS — LILYD ALE, COLDSTREAM AND MT EVELYN

PETER MASON

30 Heath Avenue, Mt Evelyn, Victoria. 3796.

Received 12 June, 1983; Revised 12 October, 1984

During 1982 an avifauna census was conducted in the outer Melbourne areas of Lilydale, Coldstream and Mt Evelyn, Victoria. Data were collected along foot transects at nine different sites. The sites were chosen to give a range of residential ages, from predeveloped (before housing development had started) through to some of the oldest residential areas in Lilydale which were in excess of 50 years of age. The objective was to examine how the bird populations may change over time in response to changing habitat. Introduced species such as Blackbird *Turdus merula*, Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*, and House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* appeared to be the most adaptable species as regards habitat use. Population density in developed areas was at times in excess of five times that of undeveloped sites, but the greatest species diversity was found in the undeveloped sites. Except for one site there appeared to be a steady increase in numbers of individuals, numbers of species, biomass, and population density with increasing age of residential areas. Comparisons were made between this and a similar study in Wagga Wagga, N.S.W. (Jones 1981).