

"Eclipse" seemed to us the best of bad choices to describe this condition, at least until someone comes up with a better term. We accept that we should have made our usage of this term explicit.

Thirdly, the review says that we do not properly distinguish juveniles from immatures. The numerical age code system adopted by the banding scheme, applied throughout *Bander's Aid*, gives a scale on time whereas the adjectival system to which the review refers (adult, immature, etc.) is based on stages in birds' biological development. The two systems are essentially different. Our usage of the J code to fix as closely as possible the time of fledging is explained precisely in an appendix (not mentioned in the review). It is developed from the system used throughout Europe, which has two age codes for juveniles.

We do not, as the review states, point out the limitations of our data; we do question the inferences that can be drawn from them and stress throughout *Bander's Aid* the need for conservative judgements. The review also comments (correctly) that the birds we have studied were caught in Victoria. It then concludes that "This is why the book fails to be a reliable aid to ageing and sexing". Later, it dismisses *Bander's Aid* as a "band-aid" (sic) on the basis of arguable comment on four species. Yet the review does not establish a single instance where use of *Bander's Aid* will lead to an invalid age code or sex being assigned.

An example of this is provided by the Sacred Kingfisher. The review claims that we describe first-year birds as adults. This may be correct: we have, however, applied a conservative calendar age code (1+) which cannot mislead banders. At the same time, we describe a juvenile which was found dead below the nest. This is most similar to the first winter immature description in *Bird in the Hand* which cannot be considered definitive on this species. There is clearly more to be learned.

On the Grey Shrike Thrush, the review states that the most obvious field character separating the sexes is the eye ring. This may not be so obvious in Victoria. Certainly the most obvious character of birds in the hand is bill colour; it is also the most useful, as all but very young birds can be sexed on it.

The literature lacks consensus on eye colour differences in Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo and on a description of the juvenile Eastern Spinebill. *The Readers Digest Complete Book of Australian Birds* is the only source which mentions eye colour differences in the cuckoo, and its colours differ from the observations reported in *Bander's Aid*. The juvenile description of the Eastern Spinebill in *Bird in the Hand* differs from that in K. Simpson and N. Day's *Birds of Australia*, and is similar to what we have called an "age 1, immature" bird.

The review seems not to have recognized our purpose in publishing *Bander's Aid*. We write, "Our hope is that . . . banders in Australia will work together to fill the many gaps in our knowledge and that subsequent editions . . . will approach comprehensive coverage". We also say that, ". . . we will be pleased to receive any comment on this edition . . . and to receive new information for inclusion in future editions". The review will have done little to encourage such contributions or support for our purpose.

The correct title of our book is *Bander's Aid: A Guide to Ageing and Sexing Bush Birds*. There are five authors, not three. The price is \$17.50 plus \$2.50 for postage. It is available from A. Rogers, Lot 17, Ninks Road, St Andrews, Vic. 3761.

Ken Rogers  
Annie Rogers  
Danny Rogers  
Brett Lane  
Bruce Male

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## DATA EXCHANGE

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### Nestlings of the "Little" Cormorants

The nestlings of the Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris* and the Little Pied Cormorant *P. melanoleucos* are both dark plumaged. This may be confusing for banders when handling these birds for the first time. Both species frequently nest in the same colony and the young birds, prior to flying, climb over the nesting trees or drop into the water below.

The problem of separating the two species can occur. However, the unfeathered skin on the head of the Little Black Cormorant is a pale bluish colour while that of the Little Pied Cormorant is a rusty brown.

S. G. Lane,  
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## New Members

FARMILO, B., Meringur, Vic.  
HARDY, M., Lisarow, NSW  
MOSS, M., North Sydney, NSW  
O'CONNOR, G. B., Edgeworth, NSW  
POETER, Dr B. D., Ardross, WA  
RICHARDS, G. E., Maclean, NSW  
ROBERTS, J. P., Belmore, NSW  
SCHOEPFER, M., Bundoora, Vic.  
STRAW, P., Engadine, NSW