

Mortality in Pardalotes in Melbourne, 1960 to 1980

J. C. Z. WOINARSKI and A. R. McEVEY

Forty-six museum specimens of pardalotes were found dead in the Melbourne area between 1960 and 1980. An additional 47 birds were reported dead in that period, but left uncollected. An analysis of the dates of these mortality records indicated that deaths occurred non-randomly over months and years, with two years (1974 and 1977) and four months (May-August) accounting for the bulk of deaths. The three taxa of pardalotes represented (*Pardalotus punctatus* and *Pardalotus striatus* morphs 'striatus' and 'ornatus') had correlated mortality dates, although *punctatus* deaths tended to be more evenly spaced. There was no significant correlation of deaths with three weather variables examined. There was little evidence that starvation or epidemic were the cause of the deaths. It is suggested that the pattern of deaths reflects a major variation in actual density and aggregation of pardalotes in this area during this period.