

The Flame Robin at Mount Wilson, N.S.W.

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Most reports dealing with the Flame Robin *Petroica phoenicea* state, with varying degrees of emphasis, that it prefers the high country during the warmer months, but migrates to the lowlands for winter. For example, Chapman (1971) stated the position in the above terms, whilst Wilson (1969) stated that they are not present in the ranges of the Southern Tablelands during winter. Officer (1969) stated that:

"Migratory by nature, the Flame Robin will be seen in many areas in the colder months, which are deserted when the birds move off to breed."

This theory of altitudinal migration was supported by Stokes (1975) when he said:

"The Flame Robin is an altitudinal migrant which leaves New Chums Road during the winter. Although the dates of their departure and return vary from year to year, they have never been caught at the road between mid-April and the end of July."

At Mount Wilson in the northern Blue Mountains, with an altitude similar to that quoted for New Chums Road, I have observed Flame Robins during each month of the year. One free-flying individual was banded during winter, on 10 June 1968.

As I do not reside in the Mount Wilson area, the observations have been irregular and, for the most part, not species orientated. However, the following winter observations have been recorded:

15 May 1970	one	♂	11 July 1971	one	♂
4 July 1970	two	♂	4 June 1972	two	♂
5 July 1970	one	'♀'	25 April 1973	one	♂
20 May 1971	one	'♀'	6 May 1974	one	'♀'
13 June 1971	one	♂	14 June 1976	one	♀

Nineteen Flame Robins have been mist netted and colour banded* at Mount Wilson between April 1968 and December 1975. No recoveries or observations of colour-banded robins have been made to date. The number of Flame Robins banded by month is given in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Month	Number Banded	Month	Number Banded
Jan	1	July	0
Feb	0	Aug	8
Mar	2	Sept	3
Apr	3	Oct	0
May	0	Nov	1
June	1	Dec	0

Nevertheless, with closely comparable climatic and habitat conditions, one wonders why Flame Robins apparently vacate the New Chums Road area while at least some are present throughout the winter at Mount Wilson.

Personal observation suggests that the Flame Robin is present during each month of the year in the Northern Tablelands of N.S.W.

References

Chapman, G. (1971). *Common City Birds*, p. 70. Melbourne: Periwinkle.

Officer, Brigadier Hugh R. (1969). *Australian Flycatchers*, pp. 51-53.

Stokes, A. (1975). 'The Effect of a Bushfire on the Banding of Flame Robins in the Brindabella Ranges', *Aust. Bird Bander* 13: 75-76.

Wilson, S. J. (1969). 'Flame Robin' in H. J. Frith (Ed.), *Birds in the Australian High Country*, pp. 343-345. A. H. & A. W. Reed, Sydney.

* Bands used were provided by the Australian Bird-banding Scheme, Division of Wildlife Research, CSIRO.

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