

Albatross Banding 1974-76

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Since the last report (*Aust. Bird Bander* 12:61) on the banding of Wandering Albatrosses *Diomedea exulans* off coastal New South Wales, three successful winter seasons have brought the total of banded birds*, since the project commenced in 1956, to 3 669. In 1974, 63 birds were caught in two trips, in 1975, 244 birds were caught in 15 trips and, in 1976, 201 birds were caught in eight trips. All excursions, except one from Austinmer, were made from Wollongong harbour.

Once having discovered the cuttlefish which are available in the area in late winter/early spring, many if not most Wanderers include a visit to these feeding grounds in their migratory routine. Consequently, the proportion of retraps continues to increase and in 1974 it exceeded 50% for the first time. Slightly more than half the retraps were taken for the first time, having been banded from one to 17 years earlier. About 25% were retrapped for the second time and the remainder have multiple retrap records ranging from three to seven times. Birds caught more than once in the banding area in the same winter are considered as retakes.

Band Wear

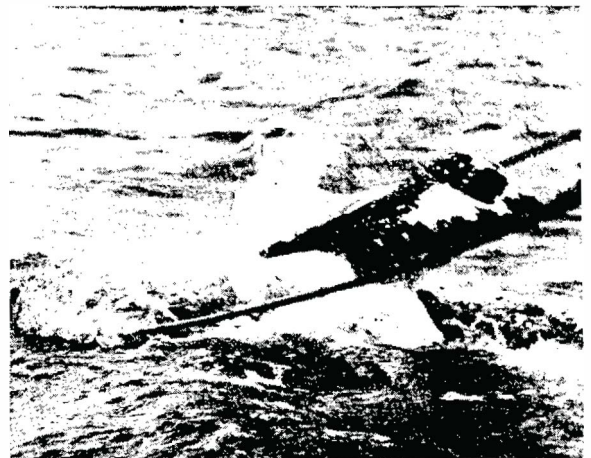
Monel bands have been used from 1963 onwards and are still showing excellent durability. From 1956 to 1962, 1 263 aluminium bands were used, of which 266 (21%) have subsequently been replaced with monel. Sixteen aluminium bands were so replaced in the 1974-76 seasons, the oldest ones, very thin and with barely legible numbers, had seen 17 years service. Several retraps still carried a hard aluminium colour band (now colourless) put on in 1960, but no numbered band, indicating that some of them have evidently been lost.

Foreign Bands

Recoveries abroad of locally banded Wanderers, and the capture here of birds with bands from

various overseas authorities, have shown that birds from the following sub-antarctic breeding islands regularly visit the N.S.W. coast: South Georgia, Prince Edward Group, Crozet, Kerguelen, Macquarie, Auckland and Antipodes. These comprise all the principal breeding areas, except for the Tristan da Cunha Group in the South Atlantic Ocean.

All but three of the 22 foreign recoveries in 1974-76 had been previously banded off N.S.W. and had been retrapped a number of times. For



● Netting a Wandering Albatross off Wollongong, N.S.W.

Photo: Illawarra Mercury

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

TABLE I
Summary of Birds Caught.

| | 1974 | 1975 | 1976 |
|--|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Number of <i>D. exulans</i> caught | 63 | 244 | 201 |
| Number of trips | 2 | 15 | 8 |
| New birds banded | 28 | 129 | 90 |
| Retraps | 35 (56%) | 115 (47%) | 111 (55%) |
| Foreign Bands | | | |
| Crozet Archipelago (France) | 1 | 4 | 4 |
| Kerguelen Island (France) | — | 1 | 1 |
| Auckland Island (N.Z.) | — | — | 2 |
| South Georgia (U.K.) | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Cumulative total banded | 3 450 | 3 579 | 3 669 |

example 140-37976—

| | |
|---|---------------|
| Banded Bellambi | July 1958 |
| Retrapped near banding place | August 1959 |
| Recorded (nesting female) Possession I. | December 1966 |
| Retrapped near banding place | June 1970 |
| Recorded Possession I. | February 1971 |
| Retrapped near banding place | August 1972 |
| Recorded Possession I. | January 1973 |
| Retrapped near banding place | July 1975 |
| Retrapped near banding place | August 1976 |

Radio Telemetry

During August 1975 the group again co-operated with Mr D. G. Nicholls of Victoria in testing the attachment and operation of 1200 MHz transmitters on free-flying Wanderers. Mr Nicholls' project is aimed ultimately at monitoring daily movements by means of satellite scanning.

Acknowledgements

Major contributors to the banding effort over the period have been H. Battam, G. Holz and S. G. Lane. Helpers have included J. Hansen, D. Barton, D. Nicholls, S. Garnett, N. Walsh, A. Mothersdill, G. Cam and A. Cam.

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Recovery Data

Items for Recovery Round-up are obtained from:

1. Secretary, Aust. Bird-banding Scheme.
2. Individual banders.
3. Miscellaneous sources.

The Secretary of the ABBS kindly provides most of the data involving recoveries away from the banding place and these constitute the largest part of Recovery Round-up. However, for a number of reasons, longevity information is not readily available from this source. Most longevity items included in Recovery Round-up are forwarded by a few banders in response to previous requests.

Banders are asked to forward to me details of longevity items which they consider may be suitable for inclusion in this section. As a guide in deciding suitability, items for the particular species should be checked in recent issues. If in doubt send the details anyway.

Hon. Editor.

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