

## Recent Literature

### BANDING and RECOVERY REPORTS

**Eighteenth Ringing Report for Southern Africa.** C. J. Vernon. 1976. *Ostrich* 47: 89-94.

During the period July 1974 to June 1975, 47 777 birds of 475 species were banded, the most frequently encountered species being Red-billed Quelea (5 649), Yellow-billed Duck (3 984), European Swallow (3 005), Masked Weaver (2 561) and Red Bishop (2 325). Overall in the banding scheme the most commonly banded species are European Swallow (137 266) and Red-billed Quelea (89 698). During 1974-75, 1 589 recoveries were made, including Jackass Penguin (257), Laughing Dove (191), Cape Teal (103) and Yellow-billed Duck (100). A Ruddy Turnstone banded in Mauritius was recovered in India.

**Papers from Ringing Group, Bird Observatory, and Local Bird Reports.** C. J. R. Thorne, R. P. Axton, R. F. Green and H. J. Harvey. 1976. *Ringing and Migration* 1: 121-124.

Abstracts of papers and reports based on banding and field studies are presented.

### ANALYTICAL STUDIES

**Acorn Woodpecker Breeding Strategy as Affected by Starling Nest-hole Competition.** Ruth G. Troetschler. 1976. *Condor* 78: 151-165.

Starlings *Sturnus vulgaris* effectively competed with Acorn Woodpeckers *Melanerpes formicivorus* for nesting holes. However, the latter excavated more holes and were able to successfully breed despite an increase in Starlings. Although the Woodpeckers have a low nesting success, they are long lived and losses of adults are replaced, the population remaining stable. Increasing Starling competition may eventually affect Woodpecker breeding.

**Analysis of Ringing and Subsequent Recoveries from a Yorkshire Blackbird Roost.** Roger and Jean Jackson. 1976. *Ringing and Migration* 1: 117-119.

Of 614 Blackbirds *Turdus merula* banded in two years, 43 were recovered, 61% were adults, 63% were males, and mortality was around 32%.

**Bird-Life on a Norfolk Farm in Relation to Agricultural Changes.** A. L. Bull, C. J. Mead and Kenneth Williamson. 1976. *Bird Study* 23: 163-182.

A four-year census period, following alterations in hedgerows and other cover, is compared to a similar period prior to these changes. Species which preferred fields (e.g. Lapwings, Skylarks) showed a marked increase, while those dependent on hedgerows often declined considerably. A definite change in community structure occurred, but losses in numbers of some types of birds were counterbalanced by gains of other species.

**Breeding Behaviour of Ospreys *Pandion haliaetus* in Scotland.** Rhys Green. 1976. *Ibis* 118: 475-490.

Continuous detailed observations have been made of an Osprey nest from 1959-1973. Ospreys arrive in the breeding area in April. Roles of male and female in preparing the nest are described. Both adults incubate, but the female stays with the nestlings and the male hunts. Fledging occurs at 53 days. Details of size of food, frequency of feeding, effects of weather on hunting and interactions with other Ospreys and species are presented. Behaviour of an unsuccessful pair is compared with the successful one of the study.

**The Breeding Biology of the Galapagos Hawk, *Buteo galapagoensis*.** Tj. de Vries. 1975. *Le Gerfaut* 65: 29-57.

Although this hawk, endemic to the Galapagos Islands, has decreased in numbers during the past 50 years to about 130 pairs, it is not in immediate danger of extinction. A territory is held for many years and averages 117 ha in size. Breeding occurs in all months and is influenced by seasonal weather. Hatching success is 45%, with 66% first-year mortality, due primarily to food shortage. Incubation lasts 37 days, fledging 50-60 days, and maturity is reached in 2.5-3 years.

**Breeding Biology of the *Sylvia* Warblers.** C. F. Mason. 1976. *Bird Study* 23: 213-232.

Five species of *Sylvia* warblers are compared and found to differ in various aspects of their breeding biology (preferred nesting habitat, height of nesting site, peak and duration of laying period). These differences presumably allow co-existence with minimal competition. All species show high hatching and fledging success.

**The Diets of Redshank and Curlew.** J. D. Goss-Custand and R. E. Jones. 1976. *Bird Study* 23: 233-243.

Diets of both Sandpipers were studied by observation of food preferences and analysis of pellets. The two methods in combination are adequate for general surveys, although certain biases occur. Pronounced seasonal changes were observed for both species.

**A Faunal Survey of East Australian Rainforests.** Birds. J. A. Broadbent in J. A. Broadbent and S. Clarke (Eds), 1976. The Australian Museum. 132 pp.

Various rainforests in mid-eastern and north-eastern Queensland and northern NSW were investigated during 1975-76. Birds were among the six animal groups surveyed. Visual observation (spot censusing) and mist netting were used to obtain relative frequencies of different species. Avian populations of different rainforest types are compared. Results, descriptions and limitations of techniques are presented.

**The Movements of Storm Petrels as Shown by Ringing.** A. R. Mainwood. 1976. *Ring and Migration* 1: 98-104.

Recoveries of Storm Petrels *Hydrobates pelagicus* banded in Britain indicate that wintering occurs off the African coast. Second and third-year birds may visit colonies, but breeding takes place at four to five years. Exchange between colonies probably involves failed breeders and non-breeding birds.

**A Winter Roosting Population of Reed Buntings in Central England.** John F. M. Fennell and David A. Stone. *Ring and Migration* 1: 108-114.

Numbers of birds in a winter population of Reed Buntings *Emberiza schoeniclus* studied over a three-year period varied due to environmental factors and time of year. Males averaged 65% of the population and were consistently heavier than females. Change in head colour due to feather wear is continual during winter.

### TECHNIQUE

**Ageing Immature Mourning Doves by Primary Feather Molt.** George H. Haas and Spencer R. Amend. 1976. *J. Wildl. Manage.* 40: 575-578.

Median ages at which immature Mourning Doves *Zenaidura macroura* replace each primary were calculated from 1 630 recaptured birds. The first primary is replaced at 38 days and the final one is replaced at 131 days. Primary replacement occurs in sequential order and is independent of sex.

**Some Biases in Cannon and Mist-Netted Samples of Wader Populations.** M. W. Pienkowski and W. J. A. Dick. 1976. *Ring and Migration* 1: 105-107.

Catches by cannon-netting show greater variability in age and degree of moult in birds than do mist-netted catches. Mist netting may sample the total population in a more consistent manner, although with a bias towards juveniles and non-moulting birds. Birds moulting primaries may move around less than non-moulting birds and thus are netted less. However, they may be slower in escaping during cannon netting.

**Sex Ratios in the House Sparrow: Sources of Bias.** Donald A. Beimborn. 1976. *Bird Banding* 47: 13-18.

Previously reported differences in sex ratios in House Sparrows *Passer domesticus* are not supported. Apparent variation from equality in ratios is partially due to increased susceptibility of males to trapping and the tendency of banders to record more immature females than males as birds of unknown sex. Differential selection for either sex does not occur with mist nets.

**Standardization of Mist Net Captures for Quantification of Avian Migration.** C. John Ralph. 1976. *Bird Banding* 47: 44-47.

A method of calculating capture efficiency by use of the average of the day's catch per net-hour is proposed and illustrated with examples. A way of determining correction factors for comparing banding at different times of day is given.

**A Technique for Sexing Woodcock by Wing Measurement.** Joseph W. Artmann and Lonnie D. Schroeder. 1976. *J. Wildl. Manage.* 40: 572-574.

A refinement of the method of sexing Woodcocks *Philohela minor* by wing length is presented which proved accurate for 99.7% of birds sexed internally. Females have significantly longer wings than males, and within each sex there appears to be no difference among age classes. Caution is advised in dealing with birds in primary moult.

**Trapping and Marking of Shorebirds at Humboldt Bay, California.** R. H. Gerstenberg and Stanley W. Harris. 1976. *Bird Banding* 47: 1-7.

Various methods of capturing shorebirds were compared. A total of 3 964 birds of 18 species was caught, yielding 3.2 birds per net-hour by mist netting, 213 per shot with cannon nets, and only .11 bird per man-hour by night lighting. Drift traps were unsuccessful. Picric acid and coloured plastic tape on bands were the most successful methods of marking birds for visual recognition.

**On the Use of Mist Nets for Population Studies of Birds.** Robert H. MacArthur and Alan T. MacArthur. 1974. *Proc. Nat. Acad. Sci. USA* 71: 3 230-3 233.

Resident and drifting populations may be estimated from the decrease in rate of capture as birds learn the location of mist nets. Relationships between vertical foraging height and the rate of capture of a species is discussed. From the frequency of recapture a species may be characterised as 'smart' or 'dumb'. A mathematical theory, the understanding of which is not imperative for using this method, is given, and a further illustration is made from actual netting data.

### MISCELLANEOUS

**Aggression Among Starving Cattle Egrets.** Glen E. Woolfenden, Susan C. White, Ronald L. Mumme and William B. Robertson, Jr. *Bird Banding* 47: 48-53.

Plumed individuals were usually dominant, and during times of starvation showed a lower mortality than non-plumed birds. Aggressiveness seems to aid survival in times of intense competition.

**Aspects of the Biology of *Jynx ruficollis*.** W. Tarboton. 1976. *Ostrich* 47: 99-112.

Observations were made of territoriality, calls, feeding, moult and breeding behaviour in the Red-breasted Wryneck. Mean clutch size is 3.1 and average brood size is 2.5. Incubation lasts for two weeks and is shared by both adults. Wrynecks feed chiefly on ants. A single annual moult occurs after breeding. The biology of the two species of *Jynx* are compared.

**Breeding Population of the Ringed Plover in Britain.** A. J. Prater. 1976. *Bird Study* 23: 155-161.

The principal breeding localities of Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* were censused and the habitat utilised was noted. Over 5 700 pairs were recorded. Considerable change in habitat preference has occurred in past years as a result of disturbance by man of preferred areas, with a noticeable move to gravel pits and farmlands.

**Differential Mortality and Dispersal of Male Blackbirds.** Paul J. Greenwood and Paul H. Harvey. 1976. *Ringing and Migration* 1: 75-77.

The distances moved by 204 male Blackbirds *Turdus merula*, which had been banded as juveniles and recovered dead in a subsequent breeding season were calculated. The greater the period between banding and recovery, the smaller the proportion of returns. Possibly birds forced to disperse, due to failure to establish breeding territories near their birthplaces, suffer a higher mortality rate.

**Feeding Behaviour of North American Herons.** James A. Kushlan. 1976. *Auk* 93: 86-94.

Twenty-eight different feeding behaviours have been observed among 12 species of Herons. No species demonstrates all methods of feeding, but some, such as the diurnal Herons and Egrets, are more versatile (show more varied behaviour) than others, such as Bitterns and Night Herons.

**Growth and Development of Nestling Brown Pelicans.** Ralph W. Schreiber. 1976. *Bird Banding* 47: 19-39.

Growth rates of culmen, tarsus, wing and weight, and various plumage characteristics, are given for Brown Pelicans *Pelecanus occidentalis*, allowing ageing of nestlings. Starvation usually occurs in young birds which do not grow within certain limits. The value of different growth rates for different body parts is correlated with survival needs.

**Mortality in British Gulls.** J. J. M. Flegg and R. A. Morgan. 1976. *Ringing and Migration* 1: 65-74.

In six species of gulls, mortality peaks occur during the breeding season, particularly after the fledging period, while winter mortality is low. Average annual mortalities based on recoveries range from 20-34%. Major causes of death vary from collisions with wires or vehicles in land frequenting species, to oiling in marine species. Changes in migratory behaviour in some species are discussed.

**Nesting Habitat for Red-headed Woodpeckers in South-western Virginia.** Richard N. Connor. *Bird Banding* 47: 40-43.

Red-headed Woodpeckers *Melanerpes erythrocephalus* prefer mature woodlots providing open areas, easy access to ground and abundant nest sites in old trees. Dead trees are important to this species as potential nesting sites.

**A Re-evaluation of Mortality Rates in Adult Herring Gulls.** John A. Kadlec. 1976. *Bird Banding* 47: 8-12.

New data yield an annual mortality rate of adults of 20-25% compared with earlier estimates by other authors of 4-9%. Possible explanations and errors of assumption in calculating the figures, including band loss and underestimation of reproductive rate, are discussed.

**Seabirds Found Dead in New Zealand in 1974.** C. R. Veitch. 1976. *Notornis* 23: 168-178.

Examination of 2 909 kilometres of coast yielded 24 747 dead seabirds of 56 species. Two large kills of 3 500 Fairy Penguins and 1 300 Prion sp. were apparently due to starvation. Most frequently recorded species for the year were Fairy Penguin (4 741), Medium-billed Prion (5 228) and Antarctic Prion (3 186).

**Suspended Molt of Trans-Siberian Migrants in Iberia.** C. J. Mead and B. R. Watmough. 1976. *Ringing and Migration* 23: 187-196.

Migratory birds were examined for condition of molt and found to either (1) renew flight feathers prior to migration, (2) migrate with old feathers, or (3) suspend molt. The adaptive value of these moulting schemes and exceptions to them are discussed.

**Use of Tree Cavities by Nesting Eastern Bluebirds.** Benedict C. Pinkowski. 1976. *J. Wildl. Manage.* 40: 556-563.

Investigation of 98 nesting pairs of Eastern Bluebirds *Sialia sialis* showed that 96 used holes in dead trees or limbs, preferring those made by Woodpeckers in pine and oak. Removal of dead trees and maintenance of even-aged stands are detrimental to this species.

**Weights of Blackcaps on Migration.** D. R. Lungslow. 1976. *Ringing and Migration* 1: 78-91.

Weights of migrating Blackcaps *Sylvia atricapilla* are compared with those of summering and wintering birds. Birds making pre-migration stopovers did not begin to gain weight until the second day, but by the fifth day could show a weight increase of 45%. Factors affecting weight during migration are discussed.

**Weight Variations of Ringed Plovers on the Dee Estuary.** R. A. Fades and J. D. Okill. 1976. *Ringing and Migration* 1: 92-97.

Ringed Plovers *Charadrius hiaticula* migrating between northern Greenland and West Africa pass through Dee Estuary in Britain in May and August. A small number of moulting adults taken in fall are possibly those which bred in Britain.

---

## Subscriptions

Subscriptions fall due on 1 January. If you have not already renewed your subscription for 1977, please do so promptly to ensure continuity of receipt of your journal and avoid unnecessary cost to the Association.