



FLIGHTLINES

Newsletter Of The Australian Bird And Bat Banding Scheme

Number 22 - January 1999

Edited By Belinda Dettmann

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BANDING OFFICE UPDATE

The Banding Office is moving

On **Friday 12 February 1999** the Banding Office will be moving to new premises on the third floor of the Administration Building, Parkes Place, Parkes, ACT. The move will consolidate most Canberra-based officers of Environment Australia under the one roof.

Our postal address will remain unchanged, as

ABBBS
GPO Box 8
CANBERRA ACT 2601.

From **Monday 15 February 1999** the direct dial telephone and fax numbers and email addresses for the Banding Office will be:

	Telephone	Fax	Email address
Barry Baker	(02) 6274 2402	(02) 6274 2455	barry.baker@ea.gov.au
Belinda Dettmann	(02) 6274 2405	(02) 6274 2455	belinda.dettmann@ea.gov.au
David Drynan	(02) 6274 2407	(02) 6274 2455	david.drynan@ea.gov.au
Lisa Hardy	(02) 6274 2406	(02) 6274 2455	lisa.hardy@ea.gov.au
Narelle Montgomery	(02) 6274 2404	(02) 6274 2455	narelle.montgomery@ea.gov.au
General enquiries	(02) 6274 2404	(02) 6274 2455	

Banding Authority Renewals and Project Reports Due Soon

Banders are reminded that all banding authorities and fee payments will be due for renewal on 30 June 1999. Requests for payment will be sent in May. If you do not receive a request by 15 June 1999, please contact the Banding Office as soon as possible. Banders enrolled after 1 January 1999 are not required to renew their authorities until 2000.

Requests for project renewals and progress reports will also be sent to project supervisors in May, and the deadline for a response is 31 July.

Request for updated contact details and permissions from banders

The ABBBS needs to update our list of bander contact details, particularly current phone and fax numbers and email addresses, and details of who has given permission for the ABBBS to provide their names and addresses and/or banding information to various classes of enquirers.

The last page of this month's *Flightlines* consists of a tear-off form. We ask all current banders to fill out the form and return it to the banding office at your earliest convenience.

Requirement to record by species no longer applies

For all banders who still use field datasheets to submit their data, it is no longer essential for these sheets to be recorded by species.

When a small number of birds are banded, representing a variety of species, banders can save data sheets by recording all species on the same page.

ABBBS POLICY ON BANDING REHABILITATED BIRDS AND BATS

The ABBBS has recently been involved in intensive discussion with a variety of community groups and government instrumentalities on the subject of rehabilitation of native wildlife. To facilitate these discussions the ABBBS has determined its policy position on the banding of rehabilitated birds and bats, and this policy is outlined below.

Introduction

The Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme (ABBBS) aims to assist in the conservation and understanding of Australia's native birds and bats through studies involving banding. It achieves its aims by:

- coordinating wild bird and bat studies which use bands or colour-marking as an essential tool for research;
- providing bands and equipment to approved researchers to band birds and bats;
- maintaining a database for the efficient management of data collected under the schemes and;
- providing technical advice, data and analytical assistance to Government, non-government organisations and researchers to contribute to the conservation and knowledge of Australia's bird and bat fauna, particularly where data are relevant to Australia's obligations under international treaties and government funded conservation programs.

As the primary aim of the ABBBS is to support bona fide research on healthy wild animals, the banding of rehabilitated birds and bats is not encouraged. In recent years, only a limited number of rehabilitation projects have been supported.

Contribution

Historically, the main purpose of banding rehabilitated birds and bats has been to collect information on the effectiveness of rehabilitation techniques. Since 1984, 344 species of birds and bats have been banded following rehabilitation and in many cases there is now over 10 years worth of data available. This should provide a sufficient basis for the evaluation of many rehabilitation techniques. The most popular species that have been rehabilitated and banded before release are:

- ◇ Rainbow Lorikeets;
- ◇ Australian Magpies; and
- ◇ Laughing Kookaburras.

To date, only a handful of projects have been analysed with a view to quantifying the effectiveness of rehabilitation and publishing the results. There has been a noticeable reluctance on the part of many rehabilitation groups to publish results, particularly when compared to the volume of published material resulting from banding studies of wild animals.

Discussions with groups involved in rehabilitation work have indicated that most rehabilitators only want to band animals to learn about their fate on release.

In most cases, banding is not the best way of getting this information. Unlike the situation in Europe where a high number of bands are returned by the public, the population size of Australia in relation to the size of the continent means that very few banded animals are ever recovered by the general public. For example, the current public recovery rate of banded animals within Australia is less than 1%. It is therefore necessary to band a great number of animals in order to receive any useful information when relying solely on banding as a marking or tracking technique.

Much of the recovery information collected on banded birds in Australia is gathered by the researchers themselves. The ABBBS rarely approves projects on wild birds if the researcher is relying solely on public recoveries to generate the bulk of the data for their project.

Radio tracking has been shown to be a much more effective technique to collect relevant information in a very short period of time. For example, the Ku-ring-gai Bat Conservation Society recently completed a radio tracking study on rehabilitated flying foxes in conjunction with the University of New South Wales. Hand reared flying foxes were radio tracked to determine their fate following release. Radio tracking over three years produced results that caused the Ku-ring-gai Bat Conservation Society to initiate changes in their rearing and release procedures. The information derived from radio tracking that facilitated these changes would not have been possible if the Society had relied on the general public to recover and report banded individuals. The cost of using radio tracking is no longer

prohibitive for care groups, particularly if studies are undertaken in cooperation with universities or other organisations with access to equipment.

It is also necessary to consider what, if any, contribution the banding of rehabilitated birds make to studies of Australian birds. A recovery of a rehabilitated animal is unlikely to be used in a biological study of wildlife as there is no way of knowing whether the animal recovered is exhibiting typical wild behaviour. The results of banding studies on rehabilitated animals would usually be excluded from any data analysis examining migration or survival in wild populations.

Another issue which is relevant to the banding of rehabilitated animals is that of public perception. Many members of the public are now opposed to the banding of animals and ethics committees are only likely to support bona fide research that has tangible conservation benefits. The jury is still out on whether rehabilitation of injured and orphaned wildlife makes such a contribution to conservation.

The Future

Further work on evaluating rehabilitation techniques for birds that have been commonly banded in the past will generally not be supported until prior work has been evaluated and disseminated. This is especially so for those species commonly banded in the past following rehabilitation. There is no need to replicate previous banding practices solely to examine the effectiveness of rehabilitation techniques used.

The ABBBS will consider supporting projects involving limited rehabilitation banding of selected species if it can be demonstrated that:

- * there is no current information about the efficacy of rehabilitation for the species concerned;
- * the project is supported by the relevant State/Territory government;
- * the project contains clear, concise objectives that will lead to a practical outcome;
- * consideration has been given to sound experimental design practices;
- * a systematic approach to data collection and analysis is included;
- * the results of the study will be written up and widely disseminated; and
- * adequate resources are made available to support the project.

If it cannot be demonstrated that these criteria have been considered and addressed, then it is unlikely that the project will gain support from the ABBBS.

CONGRATULATIONS: JIRO KIKKAWA, AM

One of our long-established banders, Emeritus Professor Jiro Kikkawa of Chapel Hill, Queensland, was recognised in the 1999 Australia Day honours list. Jiro became a Member (AM) in the General Division of the Order of Australia, for service to ecological research, to conservation and to the ornithology of Australian tropical rainforests.

NEW PROJECT APPROVALS

Thirty two new projects have been approved since 31 December 1997. These are listed below with their aims and objectives.

Bird Species

Lee Astheimer Swift Parrot breeding biology in Tasmania

Aims/Objectives: To determine what factors may be contributing to the Swift Parrot population decline.

Philip Battley Migratory ecology of Great Knots

Aims/Objectives: To determine changes in body composition of Great Knots associated with a long migratory flight; to determine how nutrients are used during this flight; to assess the metabolic consequences of changes in body composition.

Greg Baxter Biological effects of artificial feeding on Australian Magpies

Aims/Objectives: To investigate the biological effects of artificial feeding on Australian Magpies.

Michael Todd Ecology of Star Finch and Crimson Finch

Aims/Objectives: To determine the ecology, including diet, movements and breeding biology, of Star Finches and Crimson Finches through the wet season in north Queensland.

Anne Goldizen Reproductive strategies of the Buff-banded Rail: a key to understanding mating system variation in the more specialised rails

Aims/Objectives: To record group composition, sexual and parental behaviour and patterns of territorial defence; to determine parentage of young and describe genetic mating systems of groups in the Heron Island population; to determine the effects of population density and territorial quality on mating strategies.

Anne Goldizen Population differentiation in the Satin Bowerbird

Aims/Objectives: To assess and compare levels of genetic and phenotypic variation in isolated populations of Satin Bowerbirds.

Bob Horwood Comparative morphology of Laughing Turtle-Dove

Aims/Objectives: To determine whether morphological changes have occurred in an introduced bird species.

Robert Johnson Demographics and movements of Latham's Snipe in Southern Queensland

Aims/Objectives: To determine patterns of movement, to determine whether 'movement subgroups' are separable on the basis of age, sex or other attributes.

Daryl Jones Butcherbird vocalisations

Aims/Objectives: To study song patterns and individual variation in song among Grey and Pied Butcherbirds.

Ken Kraaijeveld Sexual selection and sex ratio adjustment in the Black Swan

Aims/Objectives: To determine whether males adjust their incubation investment in relation to their paternity, and if so, whether females are selective in their approaches to males during the fertile period; to determine whether males adjust their mate-guarding behaviour to their paternal fitness; to determine whether males vary in heritable genetic fitness and whether females adjust primary sex ratio according to paternal attractiveness.

Alan Lill Territoriality in Magpie-larks

Aims/Objectives: To assess the function of territoriality in Magpie-larks, particularly as a paternity guard.

Joah Madden Sex, costs and bowerbird tastes

Aims/Objectives: To determine the basis of sexual selection in the Spotted Bowerbird *Chlamydera maculata*, via consideration of female benefits, male signals and male costs.

Michael Magrath Mating system and sex allocation in the Apostlebird

Aims/Objectives: To determine the mating system of the Apostlebird; to determine the sex of adult birds within groups and assess if the sex ratio of adults varies with group size; to investigate variation in the contribution to incubation and chick-feeding by different members of the group; to determine the sex of young and examine the dispersal patterns of male and female young.

Shapelle McNee Foraging behaviour of Port Lincoln Ring neck in an agricultural environment

Aims/Objectives: To determine food sources utilised by Port Lincoln Ringnecks throughout the day and at different times of year; to determine whether foraging behaviour differs between juveniles and adults; to determine the feeding range and monitor movements of individuals and groups.

James Nicholls Breeding behaviour in the Inland Thornbill

Aims/Objectives: To determine whether Inland Thornbills nest exclusively in pairs or whether some nests are attended by more than two adults.

James Radford Conservation ecology of the White-browed Treecreeper in north-west Victoria

Aims/Objectives: To define the social organisation of White-browed Treecreeper breeding behaviour; determine territory/home range requirements and ecological requirements for nesting; to determine life-history parameters, dispersal and movements of the species.

Jeremy Robertson Mating system of the Black-faced Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax fuscescens*

Aims/Objectives: To describe the courtship behaviour of adults and determine their reproductive success; to ascertain optimal clutch size and determine whether it is affected by food supply.

Ross Sinclair Behaviour, ecology and conservation of three species of megapode in PNG

Aims/Objectives: To study the behaviour and ecology of the Wattled and the Brown-collared Brush-Turkey, and the Common Scrubfowl in the Solomon Islands, and to use this information to improve their conservation status.

Rick Webster Rice crop damage by ducks

Aims/Objectives: To determine the movements of birds from the Tullakool Evaporation Basins, so that they can be best managed to reduce damage to rice crops.

Richard Zann A behavioural study of Spotted and Striated Pardalotes

Aims/Objectives: To determine whether photoperiod during breeding affects physical condition, reproductive effort and costs of precocial breeding in captive Zebra Finches; to determine how size and condition differ between precocial and delayed breeding Zebra Finches in the wild; to study the immunological response of Zebra Finches.

Bird Communities**AWSG Establishing age of migratory waders in NW Aust during the Austral winter**

Aims/Objectives: To determine the age structure of Bar-tailed Godwit, Great Knot and Red Knot that remain in north-west Australia during the Austral winter.

Mandy Bamford Biology of the birds of Dryandra Forest

Aims/Objectives: To investigate movements, demography, ecology and morphology of the birds of the Dryandra Forest.

Sarah Comer Birds of the Leeuwin-Naturaliste Ridge

Aims/Objectives: To investigate movements, demography, ecology and morphology of the birds of the Leeuwin-Naturaliste Ridge.

**Cumberland Plain Monitoring of the avifauna of the Cumberland Plain
Banding Group**

Aims/Objectives: To document the composition of the avian faunas within each chosen area; to monitor fluctuations, both long-term and seasonal, in the community of birds; to compare the faunas associated with the different vegetative communities and to establish any movement patterns between sites.

Keith Egan Effect of fire on bird populations at Menai

Aims/Objectives: To investigate the impact of recent bushfires on sedentary and migratory bird species at Menai, NSW.

David Henderson Population dynamics of a bird community in suburban Perth

Aims/Objectives: To study the population dynamics of species occurring in suburban Perth.

**Roger Hicks Longevity and site fidelity of low, medium and high altitude rain-forest
species in PNG**

Aims/Objectives: To determine species longevity and site fidelity of species banded in PNG; and to collect plumage and moult data on PNG rain-forest species.

Ken Mills Study of seasonal changes in bird populations in arid scrub and woodland

Aims/Objectives: To identify temporal changes in avifauna in arid scrubland/woodland in the vicinity of Kalgoorlie, WA, and to identify possible correlated environmental factors.

Richard Noske Demography of birds on Darwin foreshore

Aims/Objectives: To determine density, survivorship, territory size and extent of movement of birds of selected species; to determine breeding season, roles of sexes in nesting, incubation and nestling periods and breeding success; to obtain morphometric data on species of interest.

Aldo Poiani Microparasites of Australian passerines

Aims/Objectives: To describe the distribution and abundance of bacteria, yeasts and viruses inhabiting the cloaca of native passerines.

Colin Rich Bird movements in Stirling Park

Aims/Objectives: To study the population dynamics of some common species found in Stirling Park; to trace the movements of key species to study habitat usage and resource requirements; to quantify exchange of individuals between Stirling park and another park 3.5 km away; to raise interest and awareness of the importance of the area to native wildlife.

Bat Communities

Kyle Armstrong Landscape ecology and biogeography of bats in the Pilbara, WA

Aims/Objectives: To describe historical patterns of zoogeography of bats in the Pilbara region, and to determine the factors that produce these patterns.

INTERESTING INTERNET WEBSITES FOR BIRDERS AND BANDERS

A few of the interesting and informative websites on the Internet are described below.

United States Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL): <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl/>

This is an excellent site. It describes the work of the US BBL and has useful links to other sites worldwide.

European Ringing and Migration Studies: <http://www.club.innet.be/~year1559/index.HTM>

This page is intended to function as a bulletin board for the European ringing fraternity. It includes links to Ringing Schemes on the net, "snail mail" addresses of all European Schemes, Euring - the Organisation of European Ringing Schemes, Bird Observatories in Europe, Finnish, Swedish, scientific and English bird names, etc.

SAFRING: the South African Ringing Unit: http://www.uct.ac.za/depts/stats/adu/p_safr1.htm

This site gives a brief description of the Unit, and shows recent recoveries, contents page of latest SAFRING News, how to become a bird ringer in South Africa, etc.

Bird Ringing Centre, Swedish Museum of Natural History <http://www.nrm.se/rc/>

This site includes notes on the Swedish ringing scheme, with details of numbers of birds ringed, recent discoveries, outlines of research in progress, and other topics of interest.

ABBBS: <http://www.environment.gov.au/bg/plants/birdnbat/intro.html>.

Some ABBBS information (including back copies of *Flightlines*) has been available on the net for some time. Regrettably, the information has not been updated recently, but we hope to upgrade the site and bring it up to date later this year.

Liens ornithologiques/Bird Links <http://www.ntic.qc.ca/~nellus/links.html>

This is an extremely comprehensive site which provides Bird Links to the World. It has links to hundreds of sites, arranged by geographical area, as well as by topic. Highly recommended.

BANest, the Birds Australia (RAOU) home page: <http://avoca.vicnet.net.au/~birdsaus/>

Closer to home is the Birds Australia (RAOU) website, with information on birding, conservation, research, the new Atlas of Australian birds, and more.

Australian Bird Study Association: <http://www.absa.asn.au/>

The Australian Bird Study Association Inc. (ABSA) supports amateur and professional research on Australia's avian fauna. Its web site has information on banding supplies, the *Corella* newsletter, funds available for research, current projects, etc.

BILL BOARD**The new Atlas of Australian Birds**

Fieldwork began in August for the new Atlas of Australian Birds. The atlas has been designed to describe the distribution and abundance of breeding and non-breeding populations of all bird species in Australia. As with the last Atlas, conducted between 1977 and 1981, the goal is to visit every 1° grid block across Australia. However, rather than searching grid squares, for the new Atlas we require lists of birds seen at specific locations.

Since the first Atlas survey was carried out, about 10 million hectares of native vegetation has been cleared throughout Australia (an area about half the size of Victoria), resulting in the loss of habitat for millions of birds. Over the same 15-year period about 100 000 hectares has been revegetated, yet we have no measure of whether these efforts are halting the decline in bird species. With their dependence on undisturbed catchments wetland birds are also vulnerable, as are birds living in coastal environs. The new Atlas provides an opportunity to see what effect 15 years of land management has had on Australia's birds. It is also an opportunity to put in place a system for the long-term monitoring of the relationship between birds and land management.

A book will be published, similar to that produced from the first Atlas. Maps of distribution and relative abundance will be presented for each species, as well as a brief summary of the impacts of land management on particular species. Australian territorial waters (200 nautical miles or 370 km offshore) and oceanic islands (such as Lord Howe and Norfolk Island) are included in the new Atlas. Funding for the new Atlas has been provided by Environment Australia's Bushcare and Wetland Units.

Further information is available from Birds Australia, 415 Riversdale Road, Hawthorn East, Victoria, 3123. Ph (03) 9882 2622, fax (03) 9882 2677.

Email: atlas@raou.com.au.

Internet website: <http://avoca.vicnet/~birdsaus/atlas/index.html>



BIODIVERSITY GROUP
Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme

CURRENT ADDRESS AND CONTACT DETAILS

Title: _____ Initials: _____ Preferred first name: _____ Surname: _____

ABBBS Authority no: _____

Address: _____

_____ Postcode _____

Telephone: home () _____ Facsimile: () _____

work () _____ eMAIL: _____

PERMISSION TO RELEASE NAME and ADDRESS

I hereby give permission to ABBBS to provide my name and address to the following people or organisations:

responses	Circle
OTHER BANDERS	YES / NO
GOVT. RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS (EG CSIRO)	YES / NO
NON-GOVT. RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS (EG BIRDS AUSTRALIA)	YES / NO
INDIVIDUAL RESEARCHERS	YES / NO
OTHER INTERESTED PERSONS	YES / NO
INDIVIDUALS INTERESTED IN BECOMING BANDERS	YES / NO

PERMISSION TO RELEASE BANDING INFORMATION

I hereby give permission for ABBBS to provide details of animals I have banded, as indicated below:

responses	Circle
UNRESTRICTED RELEASE OF DATA	YES / NO
RELEASE OF DATA WITH DUE ACKNOWLEDGMENT	YES / NO
NO DATA TO BE RELEASED WITHOUT REFERENCE TO ME	YES / NO
RESTRICTED RELEASE OF DATA ALLOWED, AS SPECIFIED BELOW	YES / NO

Signature _____ Date _____