

The President's Message

I wish to thank members of the Association for electing me as President of the Association. Although relatively a "New Australian" I am not a new bander as it is nearly 30 years since I got my first long distance recovery of over 1000 miles of a Starling banded in England in October, 1935, and recovered in June, 1936, in Latvia, having been killed by a cat, the bird bander's best friend for obtaining recoveries. In Australia the first Silvereye from Sydney recovered in Tasmania was also killed by a cat.

The main necessity for banding in Australia is for more banders even more widely distributed over the territory and more birds banded and schedules correctly filled out. This is the number one scientific project for banders to try to make sense of the movements of Australian birds and thus enable better conservation policies to be developed. However with the arrival of mist nets the numbers, which can be caught has risen so greatly that although the number of banders is small compared to other countries, with the issue of free rings they have been able to band relatively an equal number of birds and the administrative load has become so great, that restrictions have had to be made as have already been made in America, England and elsewhere.

Thus the emphasis on banding must now be to produce as much information in the way of measurements, sex, age and moult, colours of bill, iris, legs of each bird banded. This will reduce the total banded each day but when any bird is retrapped, the gain in knowledge will be much more. It is hoped to publish short papers on sexing and aging birds and the most useful measurements.

Continuous banding at special sites is valuable, and gives valuable information on the bird species and population of the area. The scheme is still too young for many interesting long distance recoveries to have been made by banders and the true movements of Honeyeaters are completely unknown.

More information could be obtained from banding at special sites if during the breeding season as many as possible of the nests of the local breeding birds were found, then their young banded, and if possible the parents also. In this way true life histories could be followed and when the young were recaptured true ideas could be obtained of age and plumage change. At the moment the true age of birds mist netted can rarely be determined.



Mr. H. J. de S. Disney, President, 1965.

More use could be made of traps particularly in gardens and also work could be done at night on waders and roosting birds. Mist nets could be used on supposed migration routes.

Short notes on all this work without waiting for full results should be published in the "*Bird Bander*" to enable others to share in the work and help you. This was the main reason for the foundation of the Association and publication of the Journal.

We look forward to these short notes and further articles on banding in Australia.