

## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### Towards Better Banding

The appearance of "The Australian Bird Bander" in a commercially printed form signifies something of a coming of age for the Association and is a most important milestone. It means, we hope, a considerably widened distribution, its acceptance on a world-wide basis as a journal of scientific importance just as are *Bird Banding* and *The Ring*, and an increasing importance in its content with the growth in experience of our members.

Clearly, we in Australia are rather much alone when it comes to determining our best working methods and methods of analysis (see the review of Mrs. Rowan's South African paper by Warren Hitchcock on p. 39 of our last issue). The experience of mist netters in the northern hemisphere is of little use to us as they have con-

centrated on migrant studies to a large degree, and their recovery rates of small birds at a distance are good because of greater numbers of interested people and much higher human population densities. Banding of migrant passerines, etc., is of some importance here, but very very clearly, the recovery rate alone would not justify the huge effort in the banding.

Obviously then our mist netting activities should concentrate on studies of the sedentary species with banding of migrants something of a by-product rather than an end in itself.

"The Australian Bird Bander" has already carried several articles aimed at showing some results of banding sedentary populations. The life histories of most of such species are completely unknown and the mist-netter of today has a quite unique opportunity. Never before have Australian ornithologists had an opportunity to handle so many living birds.

Obviously then the regular mist netting of an area on the basis of visits at no greater intervals than four weeks will give the best dividends.

Back yard netting or trapping can also provide worth-while data where there is an adequate population of birds. In this field, overseas experience is of value and some magnificent papers have been written over the years as a result of similar activity.

The banding of larger water birds, etc., in nesting colonies has already been shown to be most profitable as the chance recovery of a band on a large bird happens with amazing frequency.

One important point remains — the necessity to write up the accumulated data for publication. Too many of our banders have published little or nothing. The Australian Bird Banding Scheme office is geared to the preservation of data, and the compilation of an Annual Report which is an example to most other Schemes. But it cannot undertake the analysis of data accumulating as a result of a population survey undertaken by an individual bander. That is the task of the bander himself.

Therefore, let us concentrate our activities on projects which will return profitable results. The banding of birds alone gives us little or nothing; it is the retraps and recoveries that give us knowledge. Let us have the results of your research for publication in our journal. Let us band well and write well!



Mr. S. J. (Steve) Wilson, President, 1965.