



**Australian Government**

**Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities**

*Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme*

GPO Box 8, CANBERRA ACT 2601

Telephone (02) 6274 2407

Fax (02) 6274 2455

Email [abbbs@environment.gov.au](mailto:abbbs@environment.gov.au)

# FLIGHTLINES

Newsletter of the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme (ABBBS)

Number 29 – July 2013

Edited by David Drynan

BANDING OFFICE UPDATE .....	1
Staff changes.....	1
Annual Fees .....	1
Banding Office Email Address.....	1
New Regional Organiser for the Northern Territory .....	1
Paper datasheets no longer accepted.....	1
Annual Reports.....	2
Website address.....	2
ABBBS Web Portal.....	2
Copies of journal articles .....	2
Request for updated contact details and permissions .....	2
NEW POLICY ON DATA CONFIDENTIALITY .....	2
NEW BAND DESIGNS AND MORATORIUMS .....	3
POLICY ON OPERATION OF COOPERATIVE BANDING SITES .....	3
POLICY ON ABBBS PROCESSING OF COLOUR-MARKED BIRDS .....	4
GROUND PARROT SPECIES SPLIT .....	5
BILL BOARD .....	5

## **BANDING OFFICE UPDATE**

### **Staff changes**

Lisa has left the banding office!

After 25 years of dedicated service to the banding scheme, Lisa Hardy has decided to leave the ABBBS behind and make a new start outside of the public service. We are very sorry to see her go, myself in particular, and will miss her fantastic work ethic, sense of humour and cheekiness. Her last day was the 19<sup>th</sup> of June 2013.

Lisa's stay with the ABBBS represents one of the longest tenures in a banding scheme anywhere in the world, with perhaps the late Rod Cossee from the New Zealand Banding Scheme being the only officer to outlast her. Lisa has worked for many of the former ABBBS Secretaries, Executive Officers and Senior Project Officers including myself, Barry Baker, James Pook, Bruce Male, Kim Lowe, Tom Scotney, Belinda Dettmann, Jason Ferris, Tony Stokes and Narelle Montgomery.

We have managed to locate an able replacement for Lisa (yes, I know, an almost impossible task). Please welcome Sashah Abbott to the banding office. Sashah will be dealing with your data submissions from now on, so please be patient as she gets up to speed with the administrative processes in the ABBBS. We are confident that Sashah will make a great replacement for Lisa. Please contact Sashah using the banding office email address.

Lisa's email address has been decommissioned, and no-one will be checking her email. Please use the Banding Office email address: [abbbs@environment.gov.au](mailto:abbbs@environment.gov.au) for all correspondence from now on.

And a couple of reminders:

- your banding and retrap data must be validated and submitted via the secure web portal on our website
- all project renewal reports were due by 31 July. Contact us today if you have not submitted your report.

We thank Lisa for all of her hard work and dedication to the ABBBS and wish her well in her new endeavours.

### **Annual Fees**

We do not anticipate charging fees for banding authorities this year. All authorities have been renewed until 31 July 2014, and yours is enclosed with this newsletter.

### **Banding Office Email Address**

All future email correspondence must be directed to [abbbs@environment.gov.au](mailto:abbbs@environment.gov.au). Emails sent directly to banding office staff will be returned to the sender and not actioned.

### **New Regional Organiser for the Northern Territory**

We are pleased to announce that John Rawsthorne has accepted the position of Regional Organiser for the Northern Territory for the ABBBS. John can be contacted by email at: [kim\\_john@bigpond.net.au](mailto:kim_john@bigpond.net.au)

### **Paper datasheets no longer accepted**

The ABBBS will no longer accept paper datasheets from 1 March 2013. All banders that still submit their data on paper have been contacted directly to inform them of this change. All data is to be submitted in electronic format, via the web portal after it has been validated. Banders failing to comply will have support withdrawn from their banding projects.

This decision has been prompted by the escalating costs of storage and conversion of paper-based records that the ABBBS can no longer meet. The vast majority of banders already submit their banding records electronically, so this change will be minimal for most banders.

Electronic submission of core banding data has been possible for the past 15 years, and access to electronic submission was greatly improved in 2006 with the introduction of the ABBBS Secure Client Portal. The Secure Client Portal allows banders to validate and submit their records in electronic format. The Secure Client Portal can be accessed through the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Sustainability's website at:

<https://secure.environment.gov.au/deh/biodiversity/science/abbbs/>

Please note, only current A-class banders may access the portal. However, I encourage all R- and C-class banders to undergo training with their supervisor(s) on how to prepare data, validate and submit data for the ABBBS. A high level of competency in these areas will be required for any banding authority upgrades. Guidelines for banders on the preparation of banding data for electronic submission can also be accessed through the department's webpage at:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/science/abbbs/bander-guidelines.html>

Please contact the ABBBS if you have any queries or would like further guidance on how to use the Secure Client Portal.

We will also cease to accept mailed or emailed copies of electronic data after 31 December 2013. All data submitted after this date must be via the secure client web portal above.

### **Annual Reports**

Banders are reminded that ABBBS annual project reports are due 31 July every year. If your project renewal paperwork has not arrived by mid-July, please contact the banding office as an urgent priority. Banders failing to report on the progress of their banding projects may have support for their projects withdrawn.

### **Website address**

The ABBBS website currently resides at: <http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/science/abbbs/>

All of the forms you need to apply for new banders, projects, location codes or colour marking authorities are available from the site.

### **ABBBS Web Portal**

As many of you have already discovered, we have spent a lot of time and resources developing a secure bander-only web portal where you can validate and submit your banding data, as well as checking on your band issues and registered locodes. There are instruction cards for all of the processes available from the secure portal web page (<https://secure.environment.gov.au/deh/biodiversity/science/abbbs/>) or from the link on the home page. We expect that all banding data will be validated and submitted through the portal from now on.

### **Copies of journal articles**

Please remember to send the ABBBS a copy of any journal article that you publish from your banding studies. You can send them in with your annual project reports. Electronic copies in PDF format are preferred, if possible. Having copies of your papers help us to illustrate the value of the ABBBS and banding in general. Many thanks to the banders who have already sent them in.

### **Request for updated contact details and permissions**

Banders are asked to fill out the form enclosed with this issue and return it to the Banding Office. This is to ensure that we have the appropriate permission from you before passing on any personal information to potential banders or if you require data you have collected be kept confidential while you write it up (see below for the new policy on public access to data). If we do not have this form from you, data collected under your project is freely available to whoever requests it under our new Creative Commons Attribution arrangement.

### **NEW POLICY ON DATA CONFIDENTIALITY**

Our department is moving to an open data position, which will allow freer access to departmental data for the public. To achieve this, the department has adopted the Australian Governments Open Access and Licensing Framework (AusGOAL) for information held by the department (<http://www.ausgoal.gov.au/>).

The framework consists of six Creative Commons Australia licences (<http://creativecommons.org.au/learn-more/licences>). The default licence which will be used by the department is the Creative Commons By Attribution (CC BY) licence which lets others distribute, remix and build upon a work, even commercially, as long as they credit the original creator(s) (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au/>). This means that unless there is a clear case to keep data confidential, ALL banding and retrap data will be freely available to whoever requests it.

For most banders, this change will be minimal as most have already given permission to freely pass on data. The new policy is remarkably similar to our existing arrangements, in that we believe that unless data is being analysed and written up for peer-reviewed publication, it should be freely available to whoever requests it.

The ABBBS appreciates that banders should have exclusive access to data they have collected so they may analyse and write it up for publication. The ABBBS will grant a THREE-YEAR confidentiality bar to banders that request it in writing. If you would like your data to be kept confidential whilst you analyse your results, please use the enclosed form.

However, if there has not been a request to extend this confidentiality bar after three years, the data then will become publicly available.

Also, if the ABBBS receives repeated requests for confidentiality bars from banders that do not publish their work, the bar will be revoked and the data will become freely available.

Please email the ABBBS ([abbbs@environment.gov.au](mailto:abbbs@environment.gov.au)) if you have any questions regarding this policy.

### **NEW BAND DESIGNS AND MORATORIUMS**

There have not been many recent developments in the designs for bands in the past year. The one change that has been made is that size 21 stainless steel bands (either standard or special readable) should no longer be used on any short or long-tailed Black Cockatoo species (Carnaby's, Baudin's), or on Red-tailed Black Cockatoos (SW WA Sub Sp). These species should be banded with size 32 stainless steel round section bands.

However, we reiterate the changes that were made at the last publication of Flightlines. These include:

- no species of penguin are to be flipper banded
- Black Swans may only be banded with special size 35 stainless steel bands. Size 14 and 15 stainless steel bands are not to be used on this species and should be returned to the banding office.
- Wedge-tailed Eagles and White-bellied Sea-Eagles may only be banded with special lock-on size 15 stainless steel bands, and only after specific permission is granted by the ABBBS. Normal butt-ended size 15 stainless steel bands are not to be used on these species.
- Pelicans must only be banded with size 17 stainless steel bands obtained from the ABBBS since 2010. All older stocks of size 17 bands should be returned to the banding office as a priority as they are unsuitable for this species.
- there are now special size 37 and 38 stainless steel shearwater bands, in addition to the standard size 16 stainless steel bands that have been in use for many years. Size 37 is slightly smaller than the standard (suitable for Little Shearwaters), size 38 is slightly larger (suitable for Flesh-footed Shearwaters). They both retain the 'egg' shape when closed and require a specialised closing technique the same as size 16 stainless steel bands.

### **POLICY ON OPERATION OF COOPERATIVE BANDING SITES**

Banders are reminded that cooperative sites now operate differently to previous arrangements. These arrangements have been in place since 2003 and remain unchanged from this time. The policy is reproduced below.

The ABBBS issues authorities to cooperative banding sites to allow authorised banders to assist in carrying out approved banding projects at the site.

Each cooperative banding site is given an authority number which should be included in all correspondence with the ABBBS in regard to the site, including data sheets, locodes, project applications, colour-marking applications, progress reports, etc.

Each cooperative banding site has a nominated project supervisor, who must hold a current A class banding authority, and is responsible for all banding projects conducted at the cooperative site. The position of project supervisor supersedes the old position of data curator. The project supervisor is responsible for:

1. ensuring that banders working on cooperative site projects have the appropriate authority and endorsement for the work being carried out
2. collecting, validating and submitting ALL banding data from the cooperative banding site as soon after banding as possible
3. submitting ALL banding data from the cooperative banding site electronically to the ABBBS via the web portal, disk or email. Paper records will no longer be accepted
4. resolving any errors in data arising from cooperative site banding data.

Banders operating at the cooperative site must:

1. hold a current A-class banding authority with the appropriate endorsement, or, if a current C-class bander, operate under the direct supervision of such an A-class bander
2. liaise with the project supervisor to find out the objectives and methods approved for current projects to ensure that all activities will contribute to these projects
3. follow the project supervisor's directions in regard to trapping site location, project-specific activities and conduct at the site
4. obtain permission from the project supervisor to band at the site at least two weeks in advance of the visit
5. be in possession of a current permit from the relevant State or Territory fauna agency
6. record all information required by the project supervisor
7. provide a copy of such information to the project supervisor at the earliest possible time after each visit, in the form specified by the project supervisor
8. submit data relating to the cooperative banding site to the Project Supervisor, so they can be checked and validated before being sent to the ABBBS. Banders are NOT to submit cooperative banding site data directly to the ABBBS, even if using bands issued to them directly
9. use the Locodes assigned to the project(s) by the project supervisor. Banders should not register locodes in their own names
10. refrain from carrying out any banding activity that does not contribute to the projects currently approved for the site.

The ABBBS may review its support for the site if this policy is not adhered to.

## **POLICY ON ABBBS PROCESSING OF COLOUR-MARKED BIRDS**

The ABBBS has traditionally responded directly to members of the public that report sightings of colour-marked birds. The response is usually in the form of a formal written recovery report.

ABBBS resources are limited and we are unable to continue processing sightings of colour-marked birds by the public or other researchers.

This policy covers all types of colour marking such as colour bands, leg flags (both plain & individually engraved), neck collars, wing tags etc that are part of an approved ABBBS banding project.

The new procedure for colour mark sightings will be as follows:

- All communications received by the ABBBS relating to colour marked birds will be forwarded onto the relevant project holder to respond to if the origin can be established. The finder must give their permission to pass on contact details to the bander.
- The ABBBS will respond to the finder to thank them for the report, and will provide the banders details to them. If appropriate permissions are in place, the ABBBS will also forward the message so the bander can respond directly. Banders must provide the ABBBS with written permission to release their contact details (form attached and also available from the ABBBS website).
- If the bander of the bird cannot be established, the finder will be thanked for their report and no further correspondence will be entered into.

- If the project holder feels that the record is important and should be added to the ABBBS database, this is to be done in electronic format as a re-trap with normal data submissions. A new locode may need to be registered with the incoming data.
- Ad hoc requests to respond to finders will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

If a project holder requires the services of the ABBBS to assist with processing sightings and responding to the public to meet their project objectives, they will need to apply to the ABBBS in writing. Applications for assistance will only be approved if time and resources allow. Banders are expected to state if they have a need for the ABBBS to perform this work for them on any new applications for colour marking.

If a study relies heavily on sightings from the public, the project holder will now need to direct resources to responding to the public about the birds they are marking.

### GROUND PARROT SPECIES SPLIT

The Ground Parrot (*Pezoporus wallicus*, species 311) has now been split into two new species, with the eastern form retaining the original species number. All data for these species must use the new species numbers below:

Eastern Ground Parrot (*Pezoporus wallicus*), species number 311 – all eastern Australian populations

Western Ground Parrot (*Pezoporus flaviventris*) species number 8030 – all western Australian populations

More information on the basis of this split is given in:

Murphy, S.A., Joseph, L., Burbidge, A.H. & Austin, J. 2010. A cryptic and critically endangered species revealed by mitochondrial DNA analyses: the Western Ground Parrot. *Conservation Genetics* 12, 595-600. DOI: 10.1007/s10592-010-0161-1.

### BILL BOARD

The oldest Black Flying-Fox and Shy Albatross were recovered since the last issue of Flightlines. These lifespan records illustrate the value of long term programmes such as the ABBBS, and the critical importance of submitting your complete and correct banding records at the time of banding. After all, who is going to find you 20 or 30 years after the fact?

Band 072-30843 was placed on a juvenile male Black Flying-fox (*Pteropus alecto*) on 2 June 1992 at Tent Landing, South Alligator River, Northern Territory by Maria McCoy. The bat was recovered dead (cause unknown) and partially decomposed on 22 September 2012 at Jabiru, Northern Territory, 47 km from the banding site, 20 years, 3 months and 20 days since banding. This is the oldest *Pteropus* species ever recovered by around 5 years (including Grey-headed, Little-red and Spectacled).

Band 280-01731 was placed on a pullus Shy Albatross (*Thalassarche cauta*) on 31 March 1982 at Albatross Island, Tasmania by Nigel Brothers. The bird was recovered beach-washed and partially decomposed at Salmon Rocks, Flinders Island, Tasmania, 286km from the banding site, 30 years 8 months and 9 days after banding. This is the oldest Shy Albatross on record.

You can query the maximum movement and time elapsed between banding and recovery for all species via our public access web portal: <http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/science/abbbs/abbbs-search.html>