



Australian Government

Department of the Environment

Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme

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FLIGHTLINES

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

Number 31 – July 2016

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BANDING OFFICE UPDATE

Staff Changes

We have unfortunately lost Naomi Clarke from the banding office for the next 6 months as she has an opportunity to work in another area. We welcome Rachel Garcia to replace Naomi. Rachel will be managing your data submissions, band issues and the public recovery service. We wish Naomi all the best in her future endeavours, and hope that she will return early in 2017.

Annual Fees

ABBBS annual fees have been abolished. All authorities have been renewed until 31 July 2017, and yours is enclosed with this newsletter. A couple of reminders about annual renewal paperwork that are still required:

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

Banding Office Email Address

A reminder that all email correspondence must be directed to abbbs@environment.gov.au. Emails sent directly to banding office staff will be returned to the sender and not actioned.

Website Address

The ABBBS website address remains unchanged:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/science/bird-and-bat-banding>

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

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 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 analyse and write it up (see below for the current 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.

DATA SUBMISSIONS

Data Entry Courses in Canberra, Adelaide and Perth

Many thanks to the banders that were able to attend the data entry courses that were conducted in Canberra, Adelaide and Perth. The feedback was very positive, and we hope that we were able to answer most of your questions. It was great to meet many of you that we had not met previously.

The presentation slides used are available upon request from the ABBBS for anyone that wants them as a reference.

Paper Datasheets no longer accepted

A further reminder that the ABBBS no longer accepts paper datasheets. All data must now be submitted in approved electronic format via our Secure Client Portal. The Secure Client Portal can be accessed through the Department of Environment's website at:

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

Please note, only current A-class banders may access the portal. However, we 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/science/abbbs/publications/guidelines-banders>

Please contact the ABBBS if you have any queries, would like further guidance on how to use the Secure Client Portal, or would like the slides used in the recent data preparation workshops.

Transferring Bands

Banders are reminded that bands should not be transferred to other banders unless it is absolutely necessary. Bands are issued for specific project approvals, and are never to be used for any other purposes without prior approval. If you are not sure about the origin of a string of bands in your possession, either check your band issues on secure web portal account, or contact the ABBBS to check.

We are able to send out bands at short notice via express post, so before transferring bands from someone else, banders should contact the ABBBS in the first instance to check if new stocks can be despatched in time to meet your needs.

Where it is absolutely necessary to transfer bands, please remember only COMPLETE STRINGS are to be transferred (i.e. whole packets), and the formal notification of the transfer must be submitted to the ABBBS immediately after the transfer.

Banders failing to notify the ABBBS of band transfers in a timely fashion may have support withdrawn from their projects and authority.

Policy on data confidentiality

Further to the last edition of Flightlines, our Department has moved to an open data position, which allows 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.

For those banders who intend to analyse and publish the results of their projects, the ABBBS appreciates the need for exclusive access to the data they have collected. With this in mind, the ABBBS will grant a THREE-YEAR confidentiality bar upon receipt of a written application (form on page 6).

Please note, if there has not been a request to extend this confidentiality bar after three years, the data then will become publicly available. Additionally, if the ABBBS receives repeated requests for confidentiality bars from banders who do not publish their research, the bar will be revoked and the data will become freely available after the bander has been informed of this.

ANNUAL PROJECT RENEWALS

Annual Reports

Banders are reminded that ABBBS annual project reports are due 31 July every year. If your project renewal paperwork has not arrived, 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.

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.

In addition to this request, we also ask that banders acknowledge the ABBBS in these papers for provision of support for the project. Many thanks to the banders who have already sent papers in, and those that have acknowledged the assistance of the ABBBS.

COLOUR MARKING

Update on the ban on the use of plastic colour bands (several species)

There has not been any changes to the species listed in the last issue of Flightlines that have experienced serious issues with injuries caused by plastic colour bands. To reiterate these restrictions:

1. Use of plastic bands are prohibited on sp. 381: Red-capped Robin (*Petroica goodenovii*), sp. 380: Scarlet Robin (*Petroica boodang*), sp. 484: Buff-rumped Thornbill (*Acanthiza reguloides*), sp. 473: Tasmanian Thornbill (*Acanthiza ewingii*), sp. 634: Bell Miner (*Manorina melanophrys*), and sp. 365: Leaden Flycatcher (*Myiagra rubecula*).

Banders may apply to trial colour-banding of these species with ABBBS metal bands and plain metal anodised bands, such as those obtainable from AC Hughes, UK.

2. Use of two plastic bands on top of one another is prohibited on all other *Petroica* Robin species (i.e. Flame, Pink & Rose).
3. Use of plastic colour bands that sit in the basal position is prohibited on all other thornbill species, and Purple-crowned Fairy-wren, and should be avoided if possible on all other species named in this advice.

Banders require specific permission from the ABBBS for any species listed above. Failure to seek approval to colour band these (or any other) species prior to the commencement of fieldwork may result in support being withdrawn from your project and authority.

Approval required for all colour marking

A reminder to all banders that all forms of colour marking must be approved by the ABBBS prior to commencement. There have been a few recent examples of unauthorised colour marking where the banding office has not been able to determine the origin of colour marked birds, as no approvals had been obtained prior to commencement. This is unacceptable, and any bander found to be colour marking without approval (including flags, neck collars, wing tags etc) will have support withdrawn from their authority and project/s. Unauthorised colour marking can result in duplication of individual marks that can jeopardise not only your study, but other studies as well.

All applications for colour marking authorities require reasonable lead time to be able to run appropriate checks to prevent any potential clashes between studies. All applications for international migrants require at least three months lead time so that all banding schemes that may encounter these birds can be contacted to clear the proposal.

The most recent occurrence was a report of a Crested Tern that was sighted at Ballina, NSW earlier this year carrying an ABBBS metal band on the left leg (prefixed 072-), with red over lime green colour bands on the right leg. No bander in Australia is authorised to use this colour marking schema on this species. If this is your bird please contact the banding office as an urgent priority, and cease marking any new birds immediately.

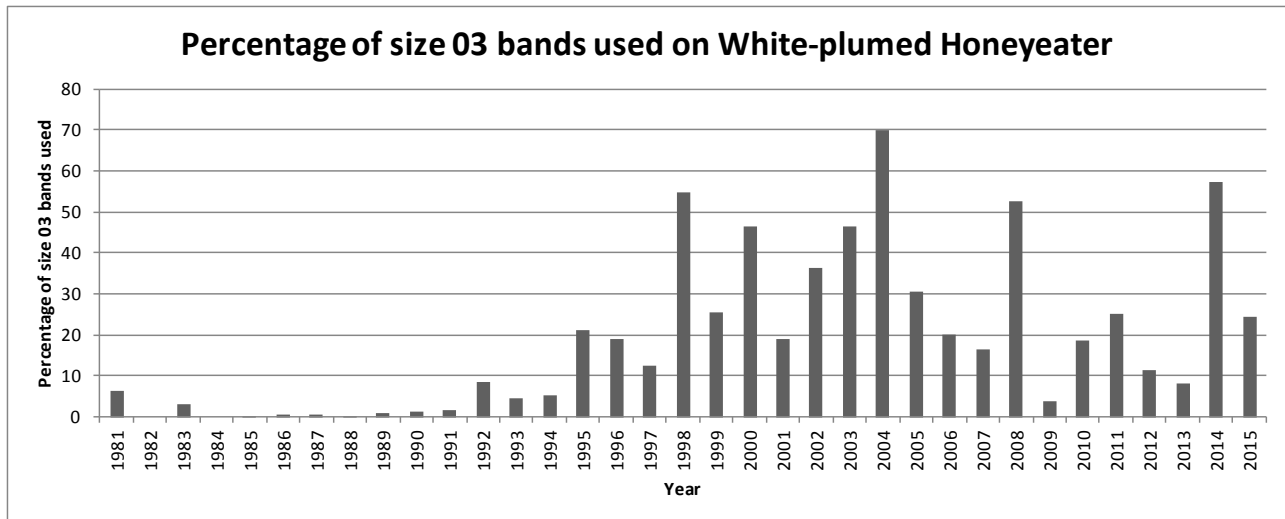
BANDS AND BAND DESIGN

Recommended Band Size List

Banders are reminded that any band size recommendation contained in the current band size list (number 24, May 2000) are made from previous experience and may not apply to all situations and individual birds. It is the banders responsibility to ensure that every bird is banded with the most appropriate band size, regardless of what the band size list may recommend. There have been several recent examples of banders

blindly accepting the size list then placing a clearly inappropriate size onto the individual that has resulted in the band having to be removed, placing the bird at additional risk. This is extremely poor banding practice, and indicates a lack of awareness or proper training in this area.

Recent papers have shown that for at least some Australian passerines, individuals are getting larger with increasing temperatures (Gardener et al 2014). This finding is also illustrated in a simple plot of the proportion of size 03 bands used on White-plumed Honeyeaters:



Clearly, there are more individuals now marked with a size 03 band than has been historically. When the last band size list was published in 2000, around 9.4% of individuals were banded with a size 03, and 90.6% with a size 02. This resulted in our recommendation of 02(03). For the period since 2000, the figure is now 33.1% for size 03 and 66.9% for size 02. Thus, size 03 are now much more likely to be required. This situation clearly illustrates the need for banders to measure the birds they band and not to just accept what the band size list recommends. Where a bander uses a size that is not currently recommended for a particular species, we ask that a trial of band size form is filled out to alert the banding office of this as per normal protocols.

We plan to republish the band size list shortly, and are proposing to do this in electronic format (Excel Sheet) for ease of future updates and instant access, rather than a printed hard copy that is mailed to banders. The electronic version would necessarily be formatted so it could be printed in hard copy for use in the field. We would be pleased to hear banders' views about this approach.

Gardener, J.L., Amano, T., Mackey, B.G., Sutherland, W.J., Clayton, M., and Peters, A., 2014. Dynamic size responses to climate change: prevailing effects of rising temperature drive long-term body size increases in a semi-arid passerine. *Global Change Biology* 20(7), 2062-2075. doi: 10.1111/gcb.12507

High rates of wear – aluminium alloy

We have had several reports recently of small alloy bands wearing faster than they have historically, in particular size 01 (2.0mm). This is of great concern for the ABBBS as the bands we supply are designed to outlive the bird on which they are placed. There has been one report of a Superb Fairy-Wren that carried a band so worn that the return address and prefix remained, with nearly all of the serial number worn off after just 6 years. If the bird had not been colour banded, it would have been almost impossible to identify it.

If you retrap any bird with a worn band of any size, we ask that you remove the band (if safe to do so) and return it to the ABBBS with the recapture data. If it is not safe to remove the band, please take as many photos as possible to illustrate the wear.

If you do replace a band due to wear, please remember to use status code 14, and define two extra columns in your data titled 'RW' (replaced with) and 'RE' (this band replaces), with a retrap record for the old band (with an entry for 'RW'), and a new record for the new band (with an entry for 'RE').

Many thanks to Professor Andrew Cockburn for alerting us to this very serious issue. The ABBBS is now investigating other possible materials for these bands.

OTHER NEWS AND ALERTS

Buyer beware – mist-nets

It has come to our attention that very poor quality mist-nets have come onto the market via online sellers on Ebay. One bander recently bought one to test the quality, and was charged \$2.83 including postage from Hong Kong. Needless to say the quality was of a very low standard, and whilst the net will undoubtedly be able to capture birds, whether they can be extracted safely is highly questionable. Banders should avoid buying nets from suppliers where the price seems too good to be true. Many thanks to Mark Blythman and Tony Hunt for their assistance on this issue.

Request for help – Oral Fistulas in birds

The banding office has received a request for help from Dr Jim Reynolds from the University of Birmingham in the UK, who is studying oral fistulas in birds. Oral fistulas are thought to be a rare condition where the skin and muscle of the lower mandible are missing in some birds, and the tongue protrudes through the opening and is often permanently outside of the mouth cavity. Dr Reynolds would like to hear from you if you have encountered oral fistulas in any of the birds you have captured. There is more information on the project available from Dr Reynolds' project website: <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/oral-fistula>, along with a simple reporting form to fill out if you have encountered any individuals with this condition.

BILL BOARD

The longest time elapsed between banding and recovery of any Australian band was made recently, with a remarkable figure of 51 years. The recovery generated quite a bit of media interest with several articles appearing across the country. Unfortunately the recovery did not mean much in the context of the life history of the species it was originally placed on, as the band and a leg bone were the only items located. However this very large gap between banding and recovery illustrates the value of long term programs such as the ABBBS, and the critical importance of submitting your complete and correct banding records at the time of banding. In addition to the 51 year old recovery, there was also a rather tragic event in Russia that involved the shooting of a satellite tracked bar-tailed godwit.

Band 110-41478 was placed on a nestling Eastern Great Egret (*Ardea modesta*) on 20 December 1964 at Bool Lagoon, South Australia by Max Waterman. The band and a leg bone were found on 5 May 2016 at Deadmans Swamp, Glen Roy Conservation Park, South Australia, 51 years 4 months and 15 days since banding. This is the oldest band recovery for the entire ABBBS.

Band 073-68238 was placed on a third year (or older) Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) on 17 October 2015 at Roebuck Bay, Broome, Western Australia by Chris Hassell and the Australasian Wader Study Group (AWSG). The bird also carried a solar-powered satellite tracking pack on its back. The bird was resighted on at least five occasions near to the banding site until its departure on northern migration, the last sighting being made on 3 March 2016. The bird was then sighted (colour bands and leg flag) at Ola Lagoon, Olyskiy Region, Russia on 7 June 2016, 9016km from the banding site, 7 months and 22 days after banding (and 3 months and 4 days since the last sighting in Australia). The bird was then accidentally shot by the same Russian researchers the next day as they collected skins for their museum collection. The tracking equipment and bands are currently on their way back to Australia via post, which is a tragic end to a short but remarkable life.

You can query these details for all species via our public access web portal:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/topics/science-and-research/bird-and-bat-banding/banding-data/search-abbbs-database>



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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:

Circle responses

OTHER BANDERS	YES / NO
GOVT. RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS (EG CSIRO)	YES / NO
NON-GOVT. RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS (EG RAOU)	YES / NO
INDIVIDUAL RESEARCHERS	YES / NO
OTHER INTERESTED PERSONS	YES / NO
INDIVIDUALS INTERESTED IN BECOMING BANDERS	YES / NO
PUBLISH NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS ON ABBBS WEB SITE	YES / NO

REQUEST FOR CONFIDENTIALTY OF BANDING DATA

The Department has adopted the Australian Government Open Access and Licensing (AusGOAL) framework, where all data are freely available to any interested parties that request it, with due acknowledgement for the original collector. Banders may request confidentiality for data they have collected. Any request for confidentiality must be accompanied by a business case, and will be granted for a maximum of 3 years. In the absence of a confidentiality request, all data will be freely available.

Circle response

NO DATA TO BE RELEASED WITHOUT REFERENCE TO ME YES / NO

If you have requested confidentiality, please provide justification:

Signature _____ Date _____