

VICTORIAN WADER STUDY GROUP



BULLETIN

Number 1 January 1980

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Editorial

They said it couldn't be done and for some time after we started I almost believed them. "They" were those who had tried before, and "it" was catching and banding waders at the Spit, Werribee.

My previous experience had been under completely different conditions with the University of Malaya Bird Ringing Project. At Kuala Selangor, near Kuala Lumpur, there was a simple but effective method of extracting salt from the sea. Shallow pans were flooded with sea water which soon evaporated under the hot tropical sun leaving salt. The area attracted thousands of waders during the boreal winter. Two lines of nets, each up to 200 yards long, were set parallel to each other about 300 yards apart along the bunds that separated the salt pans. Up to 400 birds could be caught in a night.

When Minnie and I came to Australia in 1974 we learned that attempts to band waders in Victoria some years earlier had been failures. This prompted us to have a go, despite the gloomy predictions of those who had tried before. Our Malaysian initiation led us to try to duplicate Malaysian conditions - shallow salt pans unaffected by tides. So, on Sunday, 15th Sept 1974, Minnie and I set off through the MMBW Farm at Werribee from 29 Mile Road eastwards towards Altona. We saw many lagoons but all were too deep, so for the next two weekends we moved to Cheetham Salt Works, Altona. The salt pans there were mostly too deep also but there were a few shallow ones, with waders, so we decided to try. However, what with Melbourne's unpredictable weather and the problems of moving into our first home in Australia, it was not until Saturday, 8th February, 1975, that we were able to start. We set the nets along the bunds, just as we had in Malaysia. This was our first (of many) mistakes - waders in Australia do not fly low over land masses at night so we caught only 8 birds. By now we had been joined by Jerry Klapste, who had had banding experience in Czechoslovakia. Subsequently, several more outings were planned but we were beset with problems of vicious weather (even for Melbourne), chronic sickness, and holidays, so that only 3 more outings were made in 1975 giving a total of just 9 birds banded.

In 1976 we were joined by a group of enthusiasts (fanatics?) from Monash University, who included Penny and David Paton, Elaine & Boyd Wykes, and Peter Trussler. After another unsuccessful attempt at the Cheetham Salt Works on 10th January, 1976, but using tidal lagoons by the shore for the first time, we were desperate and decided to move. My methods had failed and it was time for a change. On 7th March we tried the Spit, at the MMBW Farm Werribee, despite my reluctance to get involved with the vagaries of the tides. At that stage we had no tide tables and had no idea what was the time lag between high tide at Port Phillip Heads and the Spit.

Once again we tried putting nets on dry land (the foreshore) but quite by chance we also put a line of nets out over the mud flats into the lagoon. We caught nothing in the foreshore nets but caught 26 birds in the nets into the lagoon - nearly three times the total for all previous efforts! Perhaps this was the secret, and so one week later we tried again, and got 68 birds and a retrap! Success at last! After this we never looked back and caught a total of 616 for the rest of the year, 482 for 1977 and 1134 for 1978. However, this last total includes the contribution from Clive Minton's know-how and that is a story unto itself. We are now firmly established, after shaky beginnings, and it is up to us to continue the effort. But whatever our ultimate successes we should not forget those who struggled so unsuccessfully and for so long before Dame Fortune finally smiled upon us.

DAVID ROBERTSON

Objectives of the VWSG

The objectives detailed below have been framed in the context of the main VWSG Study Area at Werribee. Comparative data is however being generated on wader population in other parts of Port Phillip Bay and elsewhere in Victoria.

The main objectives of the study have been defined as:

- a) to ascertain, from recoveries of banded birds and from biometric measurements, which populations of waders occur at Werribee and which migration routes are used (both within Australia and overseas);
- b) to find out, from recaptures of banded birds, whether individual birds are utilising the Werribee area throughout the season and whether the same individuals return in subsequent years;
- c) to gather, from recaptures of banded birds, data on population turnover so that (in conjunction with the count data) an estimate may be made of the total number of birds (as opposed to the maximum at any one time) using the area during the course of a year. It is the latter which is important when considering conservation measures as a result of any proposed change in the environment.

- d) to obtain data on the weights of birds - these can be useful in indicating the balance between population level and the available food supply. Weight gain prior to migration also enables prediction of the likely length of journey to be undertaken on the first stage of the migration back to the breeding grounds.
- e) to collect other relevant information relating to the use being made of the Werribee area by waders, e.g. as a moulting ground. Data is being collected which will elucidate the different moulting patterns/periods of species/age groups - moult being an important function which has to be fitted into the annual cycle.
- f) to estimate, using capture/recapture data, the annual survival rates of the different species/age groups. Such data is particularly important in any study of population dynamics;
- g) to obtain data, from the proportion of juvenile birds in catches, on annual variations in the breeding success of each species. Arctic breeding species in particular are known to suffer wide variations in annual productivity due to the extreme variability in weather conditions which can occur on the breeding grounds.

The duration of the study will initially be for five years (i.e. to mid 1984). It is hoped that this study, in conjunction with population count data and (hopefully) feeding studies, will enable a comprehensive understanding to be obtained of the wader populations which occur at Werribee - probably one of the richest feeding areas for waders in the world.

CLIVE MINTON

Wader Catches

	<u>1975</u>			<u>1976</u>		
	<u>New</u>	<u>Retraps</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>New</u>	<u>Retraps</u>	<u>Total</u>
Pied Oystercatcher	-	-	-	1	-	1
Lesser Golden Plover	-	-	-	5	-	5
Double-banded Plover	-	-	-	6	-	6
Red-capped Plover	2	-	2	24	2	26
Ruddy Turnstone	-	-	-	2	-	2
Red Knot	-	-	-	9	-	9
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	-	-	-	48	-	48
Red-necked Stint	5	-	5	349	1	350
Curlew Sandpiper	2	-	2	172	1	173
	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTALS	9	-	9	616	4	620

	<u>1977</u>			<u>1978</u>		
	<u>New</u>	<u>Retraps</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>New</u>	<u>Retraps</u>	<u>Total</u>
Pied Oystercatcher	2	-	2	-	-	-
Masked Lapwing	1	-	1	3	-	3
Lesser Golden Plover	3	-	3	9	1	10
Red-kneed Dotterel	1	-	1	-	-	-
Mongolian Plover	2	-	2	2	-	2
Red-capped Plover	12	1	13	8	-	8
Black-fronted Plover	1	-	1	-	-	-
Red-necked Avocet	-	-	-	2	-	2
Ruddy Turnstone	-	-	-	4	-	4
Bar-tailed Godwit	3	-	3	1	-	1
Red Knot	-	-	-	41	3	44
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	29	-	29	85	-	85
Red-necked Stint	291	6	297	721	19	740
Curlew Sandpiper	135	5	140	420	19	439
	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTALS	482	12	494	1296	42	1338

1979

	<u>New</u>	<u>Retraps</u>	<u>Total</u>
Pied Oystercatcher	94	3	97
Masked Lapwing	10	-	10
Lesser Golden Plover	5	2	7
Red-kneed Dotterel	39	-	39
Mongolian Plover	3	-	3
Double-banded Plover	86	-	86
Red-capped Plover	68	15	83
Back-fronted Plover	2	-	2
Black-winged Stilt	6	-	6
Red-necked Avocet	13	-	13
Eastern Curlew	3	-	3
Greenshank	1	-	1
Terek Sandpiper	4	-	4
Latham's Snipe	21	-	21
Bar-tailed Godwit	201	-	201
Red Knot	61	6	67
Great Knot	12	0	12
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	516	1	517
Little Stint	1	-	1
Red-necked Stint	5813	457	6270
Curlew Sandpiper	1721	85	1806
Sanderling	2	-	2
	<u>8682</u>	<u>569</u>	<u>9251</u>
TOTALS			

1975	9	-	9
1976	616	4	620
1977	482	12	494
1978	1296	42	1338
1979	8682	569	9251
	<u>11085</u>	<u>627</u>	<u>11712</u>

Australian Bird-Banding Scheme
Wader Banding

Total numbers of waders banded up to 30 th June, 1979, and the contribution by VWSG (to same date only). ABBS total includes pulli(chicks) as well as free-flying (trapped) birds.

		<u>ABBS</u>	<u>VWSG</u>	<u>%</u>
Comb-crested Jacana	(Irediparra gallinacea)	15	-	
Bush Thick-knee	(Burhinus neglectus)	11	-	
Painted Snipe	(Rostratula benghalensis)	16	-	
Pied Oystercatcher	(Haematopus longirostris)	97	30	30.9
Sooty Oystercatcher	(Haematopus fuliginosus)	31	-	
Masked Lapwing	(Vanellus miles)	3811	14	1
Banded Lapwing	(Vanellus tricolor)	1049	-	
Grey Plover	(Pluvialis squatarola)	15	-	
Lesser Golden Plover	(Pluvialis dominica)	92	22	23.9
Red-kneed Dotterel	(Erythrogonys cinctus)	526	22	4.2
Hooded Plover	(Charadrius rubricollis)	62	-	
Mongolian Plover	(Charadrius mongolus)	312	7	2.2
Double-banded Plover	(Charadrius bicinctus)	225	92	40.9
Large Sand Plover	(Charadrius leschenaultii)	10	-	
Oriental Plover	(Charadrius veredus)	2	-	
Red-capped Plover	(Charadrius ruficapillus)	1357	94	6.9
Black-fronted Plover	(Charadrius melanops)	692	1	1
Inland Dotterel	(Peltohyas australis)	40	-	
Black-winged Stilt	(Himantopus himantopus)	421	5	1.2
Banded Stilt	(Cladorhynchus leucocephalus)	210	-	
Red-necked Avocet	(Recurvirostra novaehollandiae)	86	2	2.3
Ruddy Turnstone	(Arenaria interpres)	97	6	6.2
Eastern Curlew	(Numenius madagascariensis)	24	-	
Whimbrel	(Numenius phaeopus)	11	-	
Little Curlew	(Numenius minutus)	51	-	
Wood Sandpiper	(Tringa glareola)	5	-	
Grey-tailed Tattler	(Tringa brevipes)	210	-	
Common Sandpiper	(Tringa hypoleucos)	30	-	
Greenshank	(Tringa nebularia)	13	1	7.7
Marsh Sandpiper	(Tringa stagnatilis)	17	-	
Terek Sandpiper	(Tringa terek)	408	1	1
Latham's Snipe	(Gallinago hardwickii)	223	21	9.4
Black-tailed Godwit	(Limosa limosa)	4	-	
Bar-tailed Godwit	(Limosa lapponica)	303	4	1.3
Red Knot	(Calidris canutus)	188	97	51.6
Great Knot	(Calidris tenuirostris)	46	-	
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	(Calidris acuminata)	2883	458	15.9
Pectoral Sandpiper	(Calidris melanotos)	13	-	
Red-necked Stint	(Calidris ruficollis)	8708	4097	47.0
Long-toed Stint	(Calidris subminuta)	2	-	
Curlew Sandpiper	(Calidris ferruginea)	3639	1391	38.2
Sanderling	(Calidris alba)	1	-	
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	(Tryngites subruficollis)	1	-	
Broad-billed Sandpiper	(Limicola falcinellus)	65	-	
Ruff	(Philomachus pugnax)	1	-	
Australian Pratincole	(Stiltia isabella)	28	-	
		<u>26051</u>	<u>6365</u>	<u>24.4</u>

How they are doing overseas (Japan)

1 Feb - 31 Jan 76 (12 mths)	763 of 30 species	Japan
1 July 75 - 30 June 76 (12 mths)	1358 of 26 species	Australia
1 Feb 76 - 31 Jan 77 (" ")	842 of 32 species	Japan
1 Jul 76 - 30 Jun 77 (" ")	2544 of 31 species	Australia
1 Feb 77 - 31 Jan 78 (" ")	1017 of 31 species	Japan
1 Jul 77 - 30 Jun 78	906 of 23 species	Australia
1 Feb 78 - 31 Jan 79 (12 mths)	574 of 22 species	Japan
1 Jul 78 - 30 Jun 79 (" ")	5794 of 29 species	Australia

We are grateful to David Purchase, Secretary of the Australian Bird Banding Scheme for abstracting this information for us from his records.

The formation of the V.W.S.G.

Shortly after we started to catch consistently and in quantity in 1976, discussions were held with the Victorian Ornithological Research Group (VORG) with a view to our becoming a VORG project. Although an understanding was reached the Group's members showed insufficient interest and the idea was dropped. In 1978, however, Clive Minton (leader of the Wash Wader Ringing Group in the UK) came to Melbourne bringing with him not only his skills in catching large numbers of waders; but also his enthusiasm, ability to make otherwise sane people run around at top speed for days on end (Clive himself is believed to hold the British Allcomer's Record for running 100 metres through calf-deep mud into a strong wind), without food or sleep, in antarctic conditions, and still come back for more. How could such a combination fail? Indeed, it did not (see banding results on pages 5,6 and soon the need was felt for a more formal grouping. The Wader Banding Project became an official VORG project, with members of the Group becoming eligible for Full membership of VORG (see VORG Notes, December 1978); and on Saturday 2 June 1979 the Victorian Wader Study Group (VWSG) was formed because of the need for more co-ordination among wader enthusiasts to carry out large-scale projects on waders.

This auspicious day started the same as all Minton-organised activities - work, lots of it, repairing the mist nets at Chez Minto, Beaumaris. A sizeable group assembled to squint, peer, scrutinise (and curse) the nets in an attempt to find and mend the myriad holes, against a background of temperate jungle, euphemistically described as a garden. By late afternoon all were more or less finished and the exhausted, cross-eyed troops gathered to approve the formation of the VWSG, the Committee, and (most importantly) the annual subscription (see page 18). This done they set upon the food and drink with a fervour that would have put a swarm of hungry locusts to shame. Sated, well almost, they fell back to enjoy the entertainment: colour slides, cine film by Ralph and Daphne Keller of the early cannon netting attempts, a demonstration of venomous snake handling by Kevin Bartlett (on film) and a guided tour of the buffalo abattoirs on the Northern Territory.

VWSG Catalogue & Library of Australian Wader
Papers

In the course of research, a worker needs access to as much information as possible on his subject. This can streamline methods used, and pinpoint areas to be examined. Valuable background material can be obtained by searching the literature for relevant information.

In order to make the task of searching the records easier for people working on Australian waders, the VWSG committee decided to create a catalogue of all papers written in Australian publications dealing in any way with waders. Articles and papers have been card-indexed according to author, species, and/or place, where appropriate. Items have been divided into two categories:

Category 1 - Papers, etc. dealing with weight, biometrics, migration, site-significance, banding, censuses and breeding biology.

Category 2 - Spot-records of unusual waders.

Examples are as follows:

Category 1 - Paton D.C. & Wykes B.J. (1978) Re-appraisal of moult of Red-necked Stints in Southern Australia
Emu 78: 54-60

Category 2 - McKean J.L. (1976) A Dunlin sighting in South Australia
South Austr. Orn. 27: 101

Category 2 papers are in the card index, whilst category 1 papers are both in the index, and a copy is held in the library. Members may borrow these copies.

If information on a certain species or area is required then we can find what references exist on it and send you a list of them.

The catalogue now includes all major references on waders for the following publications and periods:

The Emu	Vol 58 - 79	(1958-1979)
The Australian Bird Bander	" 1 - 14	(1962-1976)
Corella	" 1 - 2	(1977-1979)
The Austrn Bird-Watcher	" 1 - 8	(1959-1979)
Sunbird	" 1 - 9	(1971-1979)

We are still working on NSW, WA and SA publications and in the near future hope to cover more general publications (i.e. Vic Naturalist, Aust J Ecology).

Already, the library of papers has been used by Ralph & Daphne Keller as a source of information for the film they are making on waders. If members wish to use this facility, they should detail the range of information they require, or alternatively, if they know the reference, then note what it is. These requests should be sent to - Brett A Lane, 518 Malvern Rd., East Prahran, Vic 3181.

VWSG IN TASMANIA
20-25/11/79

At 7.00 am on 20 November, 1979, five Wader Study Group members checked in eight parcels at Tullamarine, and at 9.15 am boarded a DC-9 for Hobart, Tasmania.

The intrepid party (Clive and Pat Minton, Julie Studwick, Ira Savage and Brett Lane) were visiting Hobart at the request of Mike Newman, an active ornithologist in Hobart and Regional Organiser of the RAOU Atlas Scheme for Tasmania. The plan was to join Mike and his team in catching waders on the Derwent Estuary, which in summer has a population of 3-4,000, and to show them how to use cannon nets and mist nets. The five VWSG members were billeted with three Tasmanian families: the Newmans, the Fletchers and the Harris's. All banding operations took place within 25 km of Hobart.

In the previous few months, the Tasmanians had put in a lot of work organising equipment to minimise the amount to be transported in bulging 50 kg suitcases from Victoria, and getting sufficient people in the field for the operation run smoothly. Had it not been for the excellent organising and above all, the good job of reconnaissance of potential catching sites done by the Tasmanian team, the trip would not have been anywhere near as successful as it was.

On arriving at 10.15 am a quick trip was made to most of the more likely catching sites - Lauderdale, where 70 Pied Oystercatchers and 1 Sooty oystercatcher were roosting on a sandy area 50m from a road and shops; Pipeclay Lagoon, a very tightly packed roost of c.1000 stints and c.100 Curlew Sandpipers on a narrow shingle with Salicornia only just big enough to hold them; Ralphs Bay/West Bay where c.500 small waders, c.70 Bar-tailed Godwit, 20 Knot, 3 Great Knot and c.35 Pied Oystercatcher and 11 Greenshank were located on a number of small sandy beaches at the head of the bay.

A later search on 22 November of the Orielton Lagoon/Sorrell Area revealed c.150 Eastern Curlew, c.800 RNS/CS and 30 Masked Lapwing spread out feeding in a non-tidal area but this area was not considered a suitable catching site.

On 21 November the cannon net was set at Lauderdale, about 20m from the road, firing out to sea. The tide was ebbing so the net was set well out to cover the favourite roosting area of the Oystercatchers. Within the space of a $\frac{1}{2}$ hour, the tide came in again and went out twice - flooding the net. After a quick re-set and de-grot, the Oystercatchers were finally twinkled into the catching area and after much frantic tugging of the jiggler, which did nothing but cause the birds to walk along it pecking and trying to carry the peices of cloth off, the net was fired! The result was 49 Pied Oystercatchers and it could have been 50 if it hadn't been for the over enthusiastic extracting effort by one member of the team!

Twelve Silver Gulls were also caught and banded. Later that day, we re-set the net at Pipeclay Lagoon, ready for an early start the following day.

The 22 November saw us catch 235 Red-necked Stints and 8 Curlew Sandpipers. To our delight one of them had been banded by VWSG at Werribee on 6 November 1978. When caught there, it was the heaviest stint in the sample and one of the only ones to have not started moulting yet - obviously on its way to Tasmania!

That afternoon we moved around to the other side of the lagoon to the broader beach and re-set for the following day.

On 23 November, a bit of twinkling moved 1000+ birds into our catching area. We fired, catching 567 Stints and 82 Curlew Sandpipers, 649 in total! This included one Stint which had been banded 4 years and 2 days previously by Ken Harris, one of the present team, at Ralphs Bay. This constituted a 100% retrap rate for Red-necked Stints banded on the Derwent!

On 24 November after an air-shot at West Bay for the elusive Bar-tailed Godwits, we quickly moved and re-set at Lauderdale, firing at the 200+ Stints in the catching area. As we ran across the sand to get the net out of the water, one person was heard to yell "We've got the lot!" and, indeed, 240 Red-necked Stints were located in the very middle of the net, with none along the leading edge, and only a few along the sides! This catch included one Red-necked Stint which was banded at Stockton near Newcastle in New South Wales on 22 October 1978. The net was then taken back to West Bay and set again for the next day.

The 25 November saw us in place at 9.00 am with the Godwits already in front of the net but just a few yards too far out! Much twinkling eventually resulted in all birds leaving the area altogether, so we quickly packed up and re-set at the head of Ralphs Bay, and twinkled c.250 into the catching area. We fired as the tide ebbed, catching 154 birds: 137 Stints, 14 Curlew Sandpipers and 3 Knots.

We boarded our DC-9 at 9.50 pm that night, complete with cannons, projectiles and a very wet, even heavier net! We arrived in Melbourne at about 11.00 pm. The Tasmanian trip was a roaring success with about a third of the Derwent Estuary's waders now carrying bands and a good holiday had by those who went.

The Tasmanians now have access to the Tasmanian National Parks and Wildlife Service cannon net, formerly used for Cape Barren Geese on Flinders Island, and will, I hope, add to the 1247 waders already banded.

The total catch details are as follows:

	<u>New</u>	<u>Retraps*</u>	<u>Total</u>
Red-necked Stint	1095	76	1171
Curlew Sandpiper	97	7	104
Pied Oystercatcher	49	-	49
Red Knot	3	-	3
Silver Gull	15	-	15
	<u>1259</u>	<u>83</u>	<u>1342</u>

* Re-traps - all but three Red Necked Stints were retraps from previous days

Retraps of special interest

<u>Band No.</u>	<u>Banded</u>	<u>Retrapped</u>
032 - 14781	Ad. 6/11/78 Werribee, Vic.	22/11/79 Pipeday Lagoon, Tas. and 23/11/79 when 032-22766 added
032 - 12241	F/F 22/10/78 Stockton, Newcastle, N.S.W.	24/11/79 Lauderdale, Tasmania
031 - 44322	Ad. 21/11/75 Ralph's Bay, Tas.	23/11/79 Pipeday Lagoon, Tas. (032-23075 added)

BRETT A LANE

GLOSSARY OF CANNON NETTING TERMS

1. Air shot or near miss - net fired but zero catch. Not counted in statistics in order not to spoil average.
2. Buttercup - a yellow-dyed bird (gradually turning orange brown with age). May flower in all seasons. The majority are sedentary and seen regularly; those which migrate do so to areas uninhabited by man or populated only by colour blind birdwatchers.
3. Cannon - steel tube from which projectile is propelled forward when electrically ignited cartridge is fired. In soft ground the reverse may happen.
4. Catching area - the 30m x 15m area in front of a net avoided by birds at all times. An area occupied only by decoys. Birds often prefer to roost in similar area immediately behind the net.
5. Chocolate blocks - the electrical connectors used for joining dropper cable to electric fuses in cartridges. Inedible. Original version brown, but now usually grey or white.
6. Circuit tester - the sensitive instrument which tells you when someone has tripped over a wire and broken the electrical circuit. Hasn't been developed yet to the stage where it can detect short circuits. Has been known to accidentally discharge cannon when enthusiast turns up the "zero adjustment" knob too far.
7. Covering material - an assortment of old rags gleaned from jumble. Used to cover birds in net after firing, so that they lie quietly until extracted and transported to join the rowdy mob in the keeping cages. Subsequently used to make team members comfortable/warm during banding/processing/sleeping.
8. Dropper - the electric wire connecting the cannons together and leading, via the main cable, back to the firing position. Sometimes left in position when all other equipment has been put away.
9. Firing box - the magical instrument which can sometimes be used to fire the nets. Has also been known to discharge through firer instead. Scorned by every electrical expert who thinks he can design an even better (more complicated of course) circuit, which however usually turns out to contain even more inbuilt faults.
10. Grot - material (usually decomposing tide wrack) used for covering net. Cannonflaging operation is "grotting". Grot is usually unavailable where required, and plentiful when not required.

11. Hide - an erection of flexible dimensions constructed to accommodate the whole team in maximum discomfort at the firing position. No team member, except the leader, should be able to see anything of the catching area.
12. Jiggler - cord, with attachments, laid out about $\frac{1}{2}$ metre in front of the net. This can be pulled from observation hide/firing position in order to cause birds in 2 metre "danger zone" to move away. Regarded as interesting/erotic toy by Oystercatchers. Always breaks at critical moment. Alternatively, scares all birds out of catching area.
13. Jump ropes - two metre rope (and elastic) used to secure rear of net to ground. Allows even back of net to move forward, thus increasing range. Not suitable for skipping.
14. Keeping cages - instantly erected hessian compartments providing comfortable temporary accommodation for captured waders whilst awaiting banding/processing. Opportunities for escape under sides and through slit in roof ensure that the most ingenious members of the wader population escape unbanded.
15. Leader - slave driver. The person responsible for all successes, but not for failures. Qualifications - organisational ability (especially the delegation of manual work), endless enthusiasm and optimism (especially in the face of adversity and usually unwarranted), and a sense of responsibility and sound judgment (even when short of sleep). Never gets agitated or speaks a cross word.
16. Meal breaks - something the team is not allowed except before 0500 hrs or after midnight. Like sleep, not normally part of the fieldwork programme.
17. Oojahcapivying - as for twinkling but from further afield and with even less chance of success.
18. Processing - a production line operation which measures every conceivable useless statistic on each bird (weight, wing length, bill length, moult). Takes place after banding and makes birds even more thankful to be released.
19. Projectile - 4 kg weight designed to pull the net over the birds. Range 15 metres if remains secured to net - otherwise further. Score so far 1 car, several trees, no boats/cows.
20. Recce - the search for waders roosting in a catchable location. Usually forlorn. Alternatively produces atypical result, with waders roosting in completely different places on subsequent high tides after nets have been set.
21. Retrap - a bird caught napping for the second (or more) time.

22. Runners - the younger/less experienced members of the team who walk between net and keeping cage transporting birds extracted from the net by the more experienced/older/lazier participants.
23. Scribe - person who writes down most of the information mumbled by the processing team. Main qualification required is four ears and an ability to close all to superfluous distracting conversation going on all around.
24. Twinkling - trying to move birds (usually unsuccessfully) into the catching area. No connection with similar term meaning 'watering the bushes'.
25. VWSG - Victorian Wader Study Group. An amorphous assemblage of more or less dedicated wader birdos - counters and catchers. Originally confined to Werribee Sewage Farm but more recently has spread its wings and now lives up to its name. Has also been known to migrate to other States.

C D T MINTON

Future Activities

February	14 - 18	Banding at the ICI Salt Works, Adelaide, S.A.
March	8 - 10	Banding at Werribee
April	12 - 13	" "
May	17 - 18	" "
June	14 - 16	" "

All sessions at Werribee will be based at the "Werribee Hilton" (otherwise known as the shearing sheds) on Beach Road. Assemble there on Friday afternoon/evening to set the cannon net for Saturday's morning tide.

Request

Most of the material for this first Bulletin has been prepared by Brett Lane and myself. The 2nd Bulletin will be issued as soon as YOU provide the copy. It will help the editor if you type it double-spaced (to allow him to correct your grammar, spelling and punctuation). It is YOUR Bulletin so just remember, NO copy = NO Bulletin.

DAVID ROBERTSON
Editor

Next Issue

The Double-banded Plover and the VWSG
Report on the Wader Count
ABBS and VWSG retraps
Quotable Quotes
Is wader banding a health hazard?