

Southern Oceans Seabird Study Association Inc.

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ALBATROSS

SEPTEMBER

1994

No. 4

Editor: Lindsay E. Smith

Hi once again,

First up we would like to welcome all new members to **SOSSA: (Southern Oceans Seabird Study Association Inc.)**, (SOSSA. for short). We have had a wonderful response for membership and donations. This association has been approved as a charitable organisation as from the 8th of August 94, so fundraising projects will now commence, (more about that later).

At this point we would like to mention to you that if you have not paid the membership fees **by December 94**, then unfortunately this will be the last newsletter for non-financial members, as the membership fee really only covers the costs (printing & postage of the newsletter). So just in case you may have lost your application form, then you may notice that we have enclosed one for those who have not yet joined us in the wildlife research business. This research is not only directed at endangered species, we have other wildlife and associated projects which may interest you.

SOSSA is a non-profit organisation. Since 1984 the NSW Albatross Study Group has been under the guidance of Harry Battam, (also known as) **Uncle Harry**, whose involvement with Wanderers date to 1958. This work has been supported totally both in the field and in the office by a handful of dedicated people. In many cases their only reward has been the opportunity to **meet an Albatross! (a simple act that has changed their lives forever).**

Robert Cushman Murphy summed it up pretty well when he said something along the line of:

**"I HAVE JOINED A GROUP OF HIGHER MORTALS !
FOR I HAVE SEEN THE ALBATROSS"**

Carl's Bit

SOSSA can introduce you to these magnificent birds and many more! Penguins, Pelicans, Petrels and Shearwaters to name a few.

During our regular Boat trips aboard the "Sandra K" we encounter many marine mammals, cetaceans, (Whales and Dolphins) and Seabirds. (Experienced guides on all cruises). A great way to experience the wildlife of the Southern Ocean.

For those amongst us that wish to experience the magnificent Game Fish, Blue Marlin, Broadbill Marlin, Tuna and many large sharks of several species including the "Mako". SOSSA can help you to realise your dreams. The Sandra K is surveyed and available for Game Fishing Charter. We support the tag and release scheme. This allows you to have your sport and add to our knowledge of life in the Southern Ocean!.

Library

SOSSA is building up a library of books, slides, video and scientific papers. If you have any slides or books you feel might be useful to the SOSSA library we would be most appreciative of any copies or donations.

On the 26th August 94 we managed to take some really nice video to a Pod of **Common Dolphins**, these are nice to have in the library, (The video that is, not the dolphins).

SOSSA Studies

If you require any information about any current SOSSA studies, then please contact us here at HQ and we will fill you in. We are preparing a summary of SOSSA projects and this will be published in future newsletters.

What has been happening? (LOTS!!)

Over past months we have been very busy, training some of the new members with banding techniques and standards. Carl, Matt, John, Phil and Milburn are doing well with catching and banding many Mollies (Small Albatrosses). **Mollymawk Study (Small Albatross):**

This year, (thanks mainly to the generosity of Carl Loves), we have been able to do some serious work on the local mollies, Shy Albatross (*Diomedea cauta*), Black-browed Albatross (*Diomedea melanophris* and *Diomedea m. impavida*) as well as the Yellow-nosed Albatross (*Diomedea chlororhynchos*). Carl Loves is the skipper and owner of the "Sandra K". Over the past few years Carl and his deck hand, Matt Hodgkinson have become very interested in seabirds, to a point where both of them are training to become Seabird banders.

(Banders) are people who are trained in identification of birds, methods of capture, data collection and correct application of bands. This training is carried out under the guidance

and supervision of experienced banders. With the assistance of Carl and Matt the Mollymawk study team has managed to capture and mark in excess of 300 birds including Giant petrels, Cape petrels, and Great Skua's so far this season. Amongst these have been four recoveries of French marked birds from Kerguelen and Amsterdam Islands in the South Indian Ocean. All this so far and the season is only half over. The future potential of this study is looking very promising indeed. This study is giving us an interesting insight into the assemblage of Mollymawks occurring off our coast locally here at Wollongong, including the age structure and providence of the birds in this assemblage. The recovery of the French marked birds shows a co-operative bilateral approach to the study of seabirds. On the 15th of August, Lindsay presented a talk at the University of Wollongong on "Mollymawks and Goony Birds". The talk was a great success in fact the head of the Biology Department Rob Whelan has asked if we could come back some time to do another talk on the decline of the Albatross. Possibly early next year.

Unusual Band Recovery:

Whilst out on the water looking for Wandering Albatrosses on August 3rd 1994, the team managed to catch a Southern giant petrel. The unusual thing about this bird is that it was banded with a foreign band of a type not seen before by the team. The band was written in what appeared to some form of Asian writing and carried the number MOO-2930. As this band showed no return address that we could read. It was replaced with an Australian Band 131-85923. It is not our usual practice to remove foreign bands but simply to place an Australian Band on the other leg of the bird. The foreign band was sent to the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme for identification. Lisa Hardy (ABBBS) informed us that she had never seen anything like it before and would follow it up. The answer came back that the band was of Chinese origin. We now have to wait to find out where the Giant petrel was first banded. We will let you know, hopefully in the next Newsletter which possibly will be in December???

A vote of confidence and encouragement:

The team at HQ. were thrilled to received applications for membership and donations towards SOSSA from Mrs Betty Gibson and Mrs Dorothy Sefton. These two lovely ladies are the wives of the founding members of the New South Wales Albatross Study Group, Doug Gibson and Allen Sefton. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Betty and Dorothy for their kind words of encouragement and support. It is greatly appreciated by all the team at HQ.

News from New Zealand:

The latest news from N.Z is that Graeme Elliott and Kath Walker, (N.Z Department of Conservation) did briefly visit us here at HQ early in August. Although the visit was brief, we were able to exchange ideas and information on what is happening here regarding seabird research (particularly on Albatrosses) in N.Z.!! Fortunately we were able to get Kath and Graeme out on the water to experience catching Albatross at sea as opposed to, at the nest sight on their Sub-antarctic breeding islands. Unfortunately we were not able to catch any Wandering Albatrosses (due to lack of birds). We did however manage to catch Giant petrels and Black-browed Albatross so they were able to gain an insight into the methods that we employ in catching the birds and techniques of data collection. Thanks to Graeme and Kath we now have some magnificent posters of N.Z. Sub-Antarctic Islands to grace the walls of the SOSSA office (they are very nice people). Graeme and

Kath departed for a holiday in Queensland before returning to N.Z., with a promise to spread the word and work of SOSSA throughout N.Z.

News from Tasmania

1995 THE WORLDS INAUGURAL ALBATROSS CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN TASMANIA, (Organised by The Antarctic Division). The First International Conference on the Biology and Conservation of Albatrosses to be held in the auditorium of the CSIRO's Division of Fisheries and Oceanography near central Hobart in 1995. The dates for the conference have been set for **August 28th to September 1st 1995**. At present about 85 people will be giving at least 30 oral presentations, 18 Posters and 8 Videos over 3 days. Conference themes: foraging + fisheries interactions, status, distribution and population biology.

Further good news from Tassie, Nigel Brothers advises that Population monitoring of breeding Albatrosses on Macquarie Island will commence in September this year and hopefully continue for the next 10 years, depending on funding. Nigel also advises that they were successful on Albatross Island this season with 180 deployments of PTT's (Satellite tracking tags) at three stages of the breeding cycle of White-capped albatrosses (Shy's) *Diomedea cauta*. In November Nigel and his crew will conduct a similar experiment. This time the PTT's will be deployed on Shy Albatrosses from Pedra Branca off southern Tasmania. We all wish them luck with this project.

Satellite Tracking:

We had been asked to deploy three PTT's (small transmitters that talk to satellites) this year on Wandering Albatrosses, but unfortunately these did not arrive until the 24th of August, so the possibilities for deployment became a very difficult task. We made four attempts to deploy them but the opportunities were limited as there were very few Wandering albatrosses here this year. Earlier in the season we did have three suitable birds in our hands, no transmitters. Hopefully next season, they might arrive just a bit earlier.

* * * * * **NEWS FLASH** * * * * *

*There is a Wandering albatross wearing a transmitter and
Janice named her ?*

" HARRY "

**THIS WAS DEPLOYED ON THE 9TH OF SEPTEMBER 1994 OUT AT THE
CONTINENTAL SHELF EAST OF WOLLONGONG WHILE ON CARL'S BOAT - AND
WAS FILMED BY A CURRENT AFFAIR.**

Colour Marking

Dr PJ. Milburn from ANU Canberra IS WORKING ON DYE FORMULAS TO COLOUR MARK ALBATROSSES. HE HAS COME UP WITH A PRETTY RAINBOW OF COLOURS - VERY TRENDY.

Uncle Harry said ?

Cuttlefish Project

About 20 replies were received to our requests for assistance with the cuttlefish project, and most are willing to partake. Most of the people are experienced beach sweepers and have offered to sort and measure samples of cuttle bones found.

We are currently preparing a field guide for cuttle bones, probably a world first, and a set of guidelines for the collecting, counting and processing of cuttle bones. These should be distributed in some form by the end of September.

Wandering Albatross Study Report 1994

	<u>1993</u>	<u>1994</u>
Number of Trips	23	9
Wandering Albatross - Encounters	158	14
Wandering Albatross - New Recruits	19	2
Wandering Albatross - Individuals	106	13

This year saw a combination of fewer cuttlefish, particularly 8-10 km from the coast, where wanderers are encountered, two weeks of continuous bad weather in July-August and very few Wanderers. We made a lot less trips (see details in above table) as there was generally very little to catch. We trapped 95 per cent of what we saw., including one which was originally banded back in 1959

This year was a virtual repeat of 1990, when only 16 were encountered, but in 1990 cuttlefish were abundant. It would seem that the wanderers have an alternative food source, which is not in New South Wales coastal waters. We have as a result had to postpone some aspects of the wanderer study until another year when (we hope) numbers will be greater. This work is not for the impatient.

Thank you to,

Anne Purdy in Alice Springs,

or is it the FAR SIDE?,

for your input with sending us the comic clippings, we thought it is quite a novel addition.

Perhaps other readers might like to send us good ones they find.

(Even if you do live on the FAR SIDE)



When ornithologists are mutually attracted

Raffle: We are having one!!!!

Tickets \$1.00 each or 3 for \$2.00 (**Lindsay's special 5 for \$5**)

Drawn: 26th November 94 at the Annual General Meeting in which will give us time for postage if necessary for Christmas. If you wish to attend the drawing, we will supply tea and coffee, but, if you wish something other, then please bring the other.

Prizes: **1st** Tasco Binoculars 8x30 (value \$100.00)

2nd Parrots Cockatoos book by Neville Caley

3rd Family pass to Taronga Park Zoo.

(Thanks to Andrew Irvine)

Fish Project:

The local council has shown interest in our project and some of the council members will be coming to look at our display and to discuss the conditions of the local creeks and waterways here on Thursday the 22nd of September.

Support from Sponsors:

In reply to our call for assistance, we have been successful in gaining assistance from **Southern Pathology** again - they have been very understanding and forthcoming with our projects, Thank you again

BCH PRINTING Paul Beckett, T-Shirts - Fleecy lined tops or (Sloppy Joe's) + printing. Paul has had a problem with the fellow getting confirmation with prices and has suggested we try other avenues -Any Suggestions??? this is no fault of Paul's (he's still one of the good guys!!).or is he **NO MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION!!!**

THE WOLLONGONG BOAT TRIP REPORT SEPTEMBER 1994

There has been lots of seabird watching activity since the last boat trip report in May and I'll try and summarise them.

Records from an inshore fishing charter from Wollongong on 11.6.94 included a Common Diving-petrel*, 2 Sooty Shearwaters, 1 Southern Skua and 10 Shy's and 2 Wanderers amongst over 200 other Albatrosses (including 2 impavida Black-brows). Smaller numbers of fewer species were seen the following day and a trip over the continental shelf on the next day 13.6.94, produced a juvenile Buller's Albatross**. Other birds observed on this trip were 70+ Fairy Prion, 2 Southern Skua, 2 Sooty Shearwaters a juvenile Wandering and over 125 other Albatrosses, mainly Black-browed and Yellow-nosed.

Another in close fishing charter on 18.6.94 produced 2 unseasoned Arctic Skuas, a high 22 White-fronted Terns, 1 wandering, 100+ Yellow-nosed and 60+ Black-browed Albatrosses including (2) D.m.impavida. A Peregrine Falcon was observed chasing a pigeon out at sea.

The monthly bird watching pelagic trip on 26.6.94 was fairly quiet with the following records; Albatrosses: Yellow-nosed 100 Black-browed ,50, Shy 1 and Wandering 1 Shearwaters :Fluttering 500+, Hutton's 5+ Sooty 2 Petrels, Solander's 10, Fairy Prions 5+, Southern Skua 1 and 7 White-front Terns.

An inshore charter on 1.7.94 produced a possible Royal Albatross,* 1 Wandering Albatross, 1 Southern Skua, 200+ Fluttering Shearwaters, 15 White-fronted Terns and 6 Australian Gannets. A similar trip on 8.7.94 produced 3 Wandering Albatrosses, 2 Southern Giant Petrels, 1000+ Fluttering Shearwaters an Arctic jaeger and a Southern Skua.

A juvenile Pacific Gull* at Fisherman's beach on 9.7.94 (Phil) . An inshore fishing charter on the 10 07 94 produced 75 Yellow-nosed and 50 Black-browed Albatrosses, 30 Fluttering Shearwaters, 10 Little Penguins and 1 White-front Tern.

A trip that was supposed to go out a least 50 miles from Sydney on 17.7.94 only managed to get out 7 miles due to 30 knot winds and a 3 Metre swell. However, we still saw some good birds such as; Albatrosses Yellow-nosed (25+) and Black-browed (5) Southern Giant Petrel

1 only Petrel, Cape, Solanders and Great-winged Fairy Prions 30+ White-faced Storm-petrel 1, Southern Skua 1, Shearwaters, small numbers of Sooty, Short-tailed and Fluttering

An inshore boat trip on 23.7.94 produced the second Diving-petrel* of the year along with very large numbers of Albatrosses including 500+ Black-browed, 100+ Yellow-nosed and 5+ Shys (with 1 Salvini), other birds seen were Fairy Prion 25+, Fluttering Shearwater 100+ and 1 White-fronted Tern. The monthly pelagic bird watching trip was fantastic and even I saw a new bird. There were 2 star birds during the day which were a dark phase Kermadec Petrel* which is the first record of this species for 3 and a half years and the first ever record between April and November and a Grey-backed Storm-petrel* which was the second Wollongong record. We saw lots of other birds

that day including 100 Black-browed, 50 Yellow-nosed and 5 Shy Albatrosses, Cape (10), Solanders (20) and Great-winged (2) Petrels, a White-faced Storm-petrel, a Southern Skua, 10 Fluttering Shearwaters and 5 White-fronted Terns.

Lindsay Smith went to the shelf on 3 and 4.8.94 on the first trip he had an excellent record of a Kerguelen Petrel* (the second record for Wollongong) and a combination of the trips produced 8 Shy and 2 Wandering amongst other Albatrosses 20 Solanders, 15 Great-winged, 1 Northern and 2 Southern Giant and 2 Cape Petrels, 50 Fairy Prions, a high 30 White-faced Storm-petrels, 20 White-fronted Terns and 200 Fluttering Shearwaters. Another inshore fishing trip on 7.8.94 produced the first Wedge-tailed Shearwater of the "Summer", a Pied Cormorant was present in the harbour where another Pacific Gull* had been present earlier in the week.

The rest of the month was fairly quiet before the monthly pelagic 27.8.94. Birds that we saw on that trip included White-headed (1), Cape (2), Great-winged (3), Southern Giant (1) and Solanders (30+) Petrels, only 10 Albatrosses of the 4 common species 2000+ Hutton's (were great), 2000+ Wedge-tailed and 20+ Fluttering Shearwaters, a Southern Skua and excellent views of 2 Humpback Whales.

The last piece of news for this newsletter was Lindsay and Janice's. They took 'A Current Affair' from Channel 9 out to the continental shelf to do a story on their work with Albatrosses. They managed to get a Light-mantled Sooty Albatross* on national television. How lucky can you get! this represents the 3rd record for Wollongong and the second September record. Some other birds on that day were several White-headed and 1 Solanders Petrels, 15 Shy and 3 Wandering Albatrosses. Cape Petrels 10+

- * = a NSW rarity and description bird.
- ** = an Australian rarity and description bird

If you would like to come on a monthly pelagic seabird watching trip you should contact me on
Tel: (h) 06 253 2954 or (w) 06 249 3091 Fax: 06 249 4891.

See you there.

Phil Hansbro.

Boat Trip Information or Bookings:
Phil Hansbro. (S.O.S.S.A)
2/20 Sexton Street
COOK. CANBERRA. ACT. 2614
AUSTRALIA

Contact Numbers:
Phone: 06- 249 2850 - Work
International: +616-06- 249 2850 - Work
Private: 06- 253 2954
Fax: 06- 249 0313 - Work

BRISBANE BOAT TRIP REPORT -

Leader: - Paul Wallbridge

The following information on the trip out from Brisbane, July 1994, was supplied by Paul Wallbridge The Brisbane Group is now recording the exact position of birds by GPS (Geographical Positioning System) in a similar manner to the Wollongong Group. It is expected that in the future a map will be included. The group has also been studying the wider picture in the Southern Pacific area and believes that the current weather patterns are effecting seabirds in our entire region, not just the Brisbane area.

The following birds were reported:
Cape Petrel 2 Solanders Petrel 33 Australasian Gannet 1 Crested Tern 18 Common Noddy 18.

COMING ATTRACTIONS:
Hopefully we will bringing you a report from Victoria.

This will cover Cuttlefish and Seabird sightings and possibly Cetaceans. Here's hoping that some sees something down there.

Marine Habitat Report - Tony Ashby

The **QUEST** to establish a relationship between seabird marine habitats, oceanographic features and meteorological conditions is continuing. The Royal Australian Navy at this time is considering the possibility of supplying information for an area that covers Brisbane to Eden and extending out to Lord Howe Island. This would on a monthly basis. Contact has also been made with the NSW Fisheries regarding the possibility of defining marine habitats on the continental shelf and other areas of up-welling along the coast of NSW and southern Queensland. Discussions with Ernesto Ortiz a marine ecologist with the NSW Fisheries suggests that up-wellings on the continental shelf could be marine habitats. These up-wellings of colder more productive water can be of a permanent nature or transitory, caused by the action of wind. The edge of the continental shelf is not thought to be a preferred location for the formation of up-wellings. The interaction between warm core eddies and cooler Tasman sea water can also cause zones of higher bio-productivity. Studies by Ernesto Ortiz and officers of the NSW Fisheries in regard to Coral Sea and Tasman Sea waters on the continental shelf and its relationship with the Tasman Front could be of interest to Seabird Studies. It has been found that fish and marine invertebrates can be devised into two distinctive assemblages, one southern the other northern. The dividing zone between these two groups could well be a dividing zone for pelagic seabirds.

Articles:

A&H has a story about the Albatross coming up.

Sydney Morning Herald 05/09/94. Thanks to Carl's assisting us they did a front page article on the Albatross !! Unfortunately the figures that were quoted in this article in relation to the Albatross by-catch were incorrect.

In 1991 the estimated Albatross by-catch by the Japanese long line Tuna fishing fleet operating in Australian and New Zealand waters was estimated to be in the order of **44,000** birds. If the by-catch of other long line fishing nations it taken into account then the total number of Albatross killed was in the order of **50,000 birds**. Not **150,000** as quoted in the article. These figures are based on the birds being caught at a rate of **0.4 birds per 1,000 hooks** set in Australian waters and **0.7 birds per 1,000 hooks** set in New Zealand waters. Thanks largely to efforts of Nigel Brothers of the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service, the Japanese long line Tuna fleet is using a number of mitigation techniques and devices to reduce the Albatross by-catch. It would appear that these techniques and devices are working very well indeed, resulting in a much lower Albatross by-catch rate per 1,000 hooks set.

Grant Young from **GEO** the (**Australasian Magazine**), is sending down a team to work with us they will hopefully be doing some filming on the Mollies if the Wanderers are not around. Well we did strike it lucky!! Grant sent down his field consultant Terence R. Lindsey. Terry enjoyed his stay at HQ. and you should keep your eye out for the article on albatrosses in the GEO magazine, (not sure at this stage which issue, you could just get them all, it is a worthwhile magazine to have on your desk or coffee table!!!). Terence Lindsey has offered to do the drawings of the cuttlefish bones for the identification charts,

we have suggested the museums would possibly be interested in purchasing the originals as there is nothing like them that we know of????.

A Current Affair - Channel nine.

We have been very fortunate???? this year in that we have had a fair deal of exposure in the press. There have been a number of good articles published in regard to our work. A Current Affair will be televising a story they did with us about the Albatross. This could possibly be on Thursday night the 22nd of September 94. We hope you saw it or get to see it. They were such nice people to work with, even if they did get sea-sick: **(We really did feel sorry for them. So if you saw us laughing, then it wasn't at their discomfort)** Janice!! All in all they were very lucky, we managed to see a mixed group of Dolphins and Fur Seals (possibly New Zealand Fur Seals) Andrew where are you! when we need you?. This is the most Seals that I have encountered in a group off Wollongong. There were about 10 individual Seals and 10 Dolphins, also a sun fish feeding on blue-bottles, a rare sighting of 2 Light-mantled sooty albatrosses,(1985 was the last sighting here), and a juvenile Wandering albatross (which haven't been seen here for 10 years). It Doesn't come much better than that, except when you also deploy a Satellite Transmitter on a Wandering Albatross which we did!. **Ed.**

*****PLEASE NOTE *****

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

26th NOVEMBER 94

7.30 pm start

Held at HQ. 10 Jenkins Street, Unanderra.

**We will draw the raffle on that night!!
we will let you know if you win!!**

SOSSA - FAX: 042- 724626

JANICE BOUGHT A FAX MACHINE !!!!!

(So now we are much much further in debt)

Thanks Janice! (I think!) Ed.

BIRD PROFILE

"The Pelican Brief"

Pete & Pepi?

This was Pete after the first wash ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ ⇒
 Keep in mind they are mostly white.

PETE THE OILED PELICAN

PELICAN (*Pelicanus conspicillatus*)
 (meaning spectacled eye)
 "PETE" + "PEPI" (BOTH MALES)

INTENSIVE CARE UNIT REPORT

Friday 9TH September 1994.

Approximately 1700 hours Lindsay and Janice came home after the trip with a Current Affair to see an oiled Pelican sitting on the light pole at Wollongong Harbour. We said to Carl Loves "catch". This is a common saying with us. When we want something special we say "CARL CATCH". Carl threw out some pilchards left over from the last albatross day. Pete came down to the food and Carl caught him in the net. We bought Pete home to try to remove the oil using margarine to break down the oil, then scraped off the margarine, then used non-toxic detergent LOC to wash off the margarine. Judith from WIRES came straight up. We washed and blow dried him (he seemed to like the treatment).

"Pete" BAND NUMBER: 170-08151 - WEIGHT: 7.1 Kilo

Sunday 11TH September 1994.

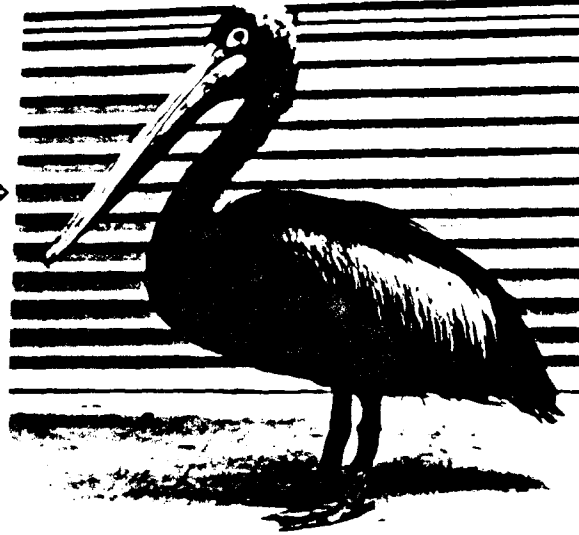
11.00 am Judith from wires helped us wash Pete with some success. (Judith now has a new male in her life, she's become quit attached to poor Pete). Not sure how her husband feels about this new found love of Judith's.

Monday 12TH September 1994.

11.00 am. Improvements are increasing.

Tuesday 13TH September 1994

After washing him there has been a great improvement he is actually a light brown on the breast now where he was just all black with the oil from the oil spill coating about 10 Pelicans with this substance like a heavy tar. Tonight Lindsay came home with another Pelican from Windang, he said it's another male. F'll (Janice) call him "Pepi" BAND NUMBER: 170-08152.



The birds had a few days off from being washed to give the feathers a chance to improve the preen oils.

When the birds are set free we will paint their scapulars fluoro green , so that people will know not to try to catch them. They will be as good as they can be until they moult and get white feathers back again. So if you see a green Pelican you don't have to question how much you've had to drink ????? or do you.???

LATE ADDITION REPORT: Sad news--After 9 good days, Pete lost the battle at 9.50am Sunday the 18th September 94.

The time has come to start banding the Fairy Penguins over on the Five Islands. As a special feature we will tell you a bit about the Fairy Penguin!! (in the Bird Profile, December issue).

INTEREST IN SOSSA.

Bird Observers Club + Royal Australian Ornithologists Union

Both of these groups have shown interest and asked us for reciprocal newsletters. We are very pleased to oblige and are encouraged by their interest.

DONATIONS:

Iris Hudson **A PENSIONER** very generously sent us a cheque with a \$50-00 donation this nice young duck was 80 years old on Sunday the 4th of September. **Thank you Iris for your kind support..**

(Not only generous, she's a very sweet lady, rotund and cuddly).

Letters to the Editor:

We have received a Letter to the Editor, and we thought this was worth putting into this newsletter.

Dear Sir,

*I am of the belief that this is an open letter available to all and sundry on condition that they are members Of SOSSA, and they have paid their dues, they are entitled to expressed their opinion, whether it be based on scientific fact, Bull---t or otherwise, we have a say, which should not fall on deaf ears. As many amateurs are also responsible for scientific discoveries, surely this gives us the rights to have our say!!!. Besides, you never know who's listening???? 🗯 (I didn't have an ear). Here are some unusual sightings **BELIEVE IT OR NOT**.....*

Diving petrel. One (1) East of Wollongong June 11th 1994 heading south fast!

Buller's Albatross One (1) East of Wollongong June 13th 1994. In company of Yellow-nosed, Black-browed and Shy Albatrosses, may stay about, also several Sooty Shearwaters, unusual at this time of year.

All sightings confirmed. OK I've had my say, I am happy now.

Yours sincerely

I.M.A. Cauta (Tasmania)

PS.(I have paid to have my say)

UNUSUAL MARINE MAMMAL REPORT from Andrew Irvine (Taronga Zoo).

On August 16th 1994. A young Elephant Seal *Mirounga leonina*, hauled out at Dee Why beach at Sydney. Earlier it had been sighted at Jibin Beach near Bundeena on Sunday 14th August, and at Bungan Beach the 15th August. The animal was in very poor condition, weighing only 60 Kilo's. When a normal 10 month old female Elephant seal would weigh between 120-140 Kilo's. Upon arrival at the zoo blood was taken to be analysed to determine the animals state of hydration and if it had any internal infection. We then attempted to force feed te animal solid fish. The next day it took the fish quite well. However, on Thursday the 18th of August she appeared to be suffering from a stomach upset, and having difficulty getting out of the water. The vets then decided to leave her in a dry holding area, and to be fed a fish milk shake. In the next 5 days she gained strength quickly making it very difficult to restrain. Thankfully by Tuesday the 22nd August she began eating on her own and she's continued eating two and a half kilograms to three kilograms each day. Although she has not gained any weight in the past two weeks, the important fact is that she has not lost any weight. The veterinarians feel that when an animal has lost so much weight that she may not be able physically to cope with enough food to put on weight but just maintain herself and it may be some time before she begins putting on large amounts of weight. The animal will be released when she weighs approximately 120-140 kilo's, which may be around December of this year. It is hoped that she will be released in Tasmanian waters and possibly some tracking to assess with our release program will be conducted.

Note from the editor

As usual the past three months have been very busy indeed, with lots of things happening. We are all very pleased with the recruitment of new members, both from around Australia and over seas. At this stage I would like to point out that this is **YOUR NEWSLETTER** and as such we would encourage **YOU, THE MEMBERS**, to become involved. Perhaps you would like to add something?. We are all interested in what is happening around us. Possibly you have something that you would like to share with our members?, unusual sightings, new projects, interesting notes or activities ECT. Then please let us know of them. It will make for a more interesting and informative newsletter, so don't be Shy, or is it Cauta? Lets have it !!. Ed.