



Cannon net in mid flight (note projectiles on horizon) about to engulf Pelicans at Pt. Walter sandspit in the Swan river.

Pelican Research 1978

In the last edition of S.W.A.N.S. Volume 8 Number 1 an article on Pelican Tagging at Albany Western Australia, drew the attention of Patrick Morant of the University of Cape Town, South Africa.

Mr. Morant wrote seeking information on our capture and tagging techniques to help in the current study of the rare and threatened White Pelican (*Pelecanous onocrotalus*) of South Africa. So far the only marking technique used in South Africa has been the usual metal tarsal band stamped with numerals large enough to see with the aid of a telescope, and only in favourable conditions.

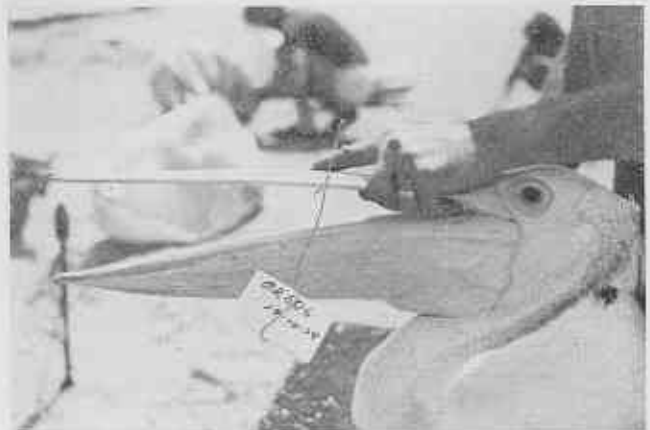
Wing tags used on the Western Australian Pelican (*Pelecanus conspicillatus*) are made from a heavy grade PVC-coated nylon fabric called "Topspan T.I.R."

The method of affixing a tag is by means of two stainless steel wire pins. The first pin is through the Patagium and is fixed by means of a simple knot. The wire is prevented from working through the tag material by a stainless steel washer. A second pin is inserted through the centre of the trailing edge of the tag between the secondary feathers of the wing. The tag is applied with the wing outstretched to allow a good fit. There have been no reports to date of any birds experiencing difficulty in flying when fitted with a wing tag. In fact, one bird was recently reported flying between Mandurah and Broome in less than 4 months, a distance of some 2 000 km.

Checks on nesting activity of all known Pelican breeding colonies south of the Kimberley Division in W.A. have been continued throughout 1978. Live trapping of free flying birds was also continued throughout the South-West of the state.

Since 1974 more than 900 runners and 800 free-flying Pelicans have been banded by the Department. Among the many recoveries have been two birds at Albany and Augusta originally banded as runners at the Fortescue River in 1976.

Public response has been good, particularly from people possessing Pelican Wing Tag Sighting Books. Numerous reports have been received of movements throughout the state. The most notable being C4 yellow originally tagged at Peel Inlet and sighted at Broome several months later.



Taking Beak measurements.