FAUNA

THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE ON BREEDING IN AUSTRALIAN BIRDS

Heather Gibbs

CLIMATE change is already happening, but how will it affect Australia's unique wildlife?

Effects on coral reefs, alpine regions, changes in vegetation composition, plankton and grassland productivity and others have already been documented[1].

However, effects on birds and other common, easily identified terrestrial species are still little known, largely because of a lack of suitable data – or because the data has not yet been 'discovered' (perhaps it is hiding in some old notebooks…).

As part of my PhD study, I have looked at a lot of bird surveys collected by volunteers in various bird groups (including Atlas and Nest Record Scheme data). Results to date suggest that the effects of climate change will be immediate and substantial.

One of the most useful data sets has turned out to be the *Garden Bird Survey* used by the Canberra Ornithologists Group. I believe it is a very practical and worthwhile way to collect bird breeding data, and I'm hoping that other groups and individuals will be inspired to try it out for themselves.

The survey form looks like this:

For each week, you record which species are present as well as the stage of breeding. It is very simple, yet effective[2].

Survey forms and instructions are now available from my web site - http://www.protoavis.com.au/cbbs.htm.

It is also possible to submit "instant nest records" via my web site – because I would like to get as much data as possible on the breeding dates of common species (such as magpies), wherever and whenever they are breeding!

If you would like further information Heather Gibbs can be contacted on hgi@deakin.edu.au.

[1] *See 'Climate change impacts on biodiversity in Australia' available at http://www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/science/bdac/greenhouse/index.html.*

[2] *The data and survey method are documented in Veerman, P.A. (2003)* Canberra Birds: A Report on the first 21 years of the Garden Bird Survey, *Veerman, Canberra.*

Week →	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	...	21	22	23	24	25
Species ↓	July				August					...		June			
Magpie															
Willie Wagtail															
Welcome Swallow															
More species …															