

CSIRO Publishing

Emu



Volume 101, 2001
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Birds Australia

Published by CSIRO Publishing
for the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union

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PAULINE NEURA REILLY

In May 1981 Pauline Reilly was elected unanimously by Council as a Fellow of the RAOU. In the resulting citation in *Emu*, she was described as ‘the epitome of those “serious amateurs”’ and was recognised for her distinguished service to Australian ornithology as a field worker, administrator and author. Twenty years on, that contribution continues without pause.

A quick check of the catalogue of the National Library reveals an astonishing 40 titles, nearly all on birds and most authored solely by Pauline. These begin in 1984 with *The Atlas of Australian Birds* (with Margaret Blakers and Stephen Davies) which is joined by two or three annually since. Others titles include: *Private Lives: Ages, Mates and Movements of Some Australian Birds* (Kangaroo Press 1988), *Penguins of the World* (Oxford 1994), and *Penguins: Ecology and Management* (with Peter Dann and Ian Norman; Surrey Beatty 1995). The balance is made up of a wonderful series of books introducing children to the wonders of nature in a most charming and accessible way. Subjects include the Brolga, Malleefowl, Boobook, Galah, Kookaburra, Emperor Penguin and *Aquila the Eagle* is due out this year. Remarkably, while the rest of us struggle to keep up with new technology, at 80 years of age, with her artist, Pauline has set up her own small publishing company to continue the children’s natural history series.

Pauline joined the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme on 15 August 1958 and held Authority No. 92 until her resignation from the Scheme in 1995. She regularly publishes the results of her studies in the scientific literature. This includes several papers on changes to her local bird population following the devastating Ash Wednesday Bushfires, in which she lost everything, including all her earlier records, but somehow found the strength to begin her surveys again. The most recent paper, in *Emu*, reported a 12-year post-fire study of birds in a Victorian coastal habitat (September 2000).



None of this includes those contributions mentioned in her 1981 citation (*Emu* 1981), which range from organising volunteers and writing up the Flame Robin Survey and Penguin Study Group reports, to her earlier books, lectures, scientific papers and term as President of the RAOU.

Pauline is a truly remarkable amateur who, among her many achievements, has made an outstanding contribution to the study of birds in Australia.

Penny Olsen
6 March 2001