

## Bat box inspection: 19 April 2009

On a clear, almost windless afternoon a very small team assembled to open up our boxes and see what was inside – Natasha and Ian were joined by Clare Crane, back from England, and her friend Andy, who recognised me from an Earthwatch project three years ago on the Coorong, studying waterbirds. Robert Irvine soon arrived and we split into two groups, which was a good thing as there were bats in 20 of the boxes, and about 240 altogether, so we were kept busy.



### Box 16 full of Gould's

The big surprise was finding more Freetails than ever before. There were 23 in April last year and 27 this April. It always seems to peak in April or May and the peaks are growing. There were 13 of them in C42 and altogether they were spread around 7 boxes, which is very unusual



Quite a few boxes had ant colonies or small groups, of several different species, a common occurrence in the rainy season, when they are seeking dry places to raise their young. The Brushtail possum refuging in C41 last month seems to have chewed its way out so there is now a big chunk out of the upper margin of the box.



the three big boxes, which have now been in place since August 05, almost four years, are proving to be a big drawcard for bats as we often now find big groups in them, which was the purpose of putting them up. There were 32 Gold's and 2 Freetails in C43



It looked as though the park staff are attacking the large number of rabbits again as a metal frame with presumably poisoned carrots was in the middle of Main Flat





The coat hangers were heavily loaded with bagged bats to give us a lot of work for the evening after our usual feast.



Debbie came with her sister Caroline and her two sons, Noah and Tate, who watched, fascinated for a while until it was time to go home to bed.



Debbie with Noah and Tate



So we had four people processing and Ian managing the scales: Natasha, Debbie, Clare Crane and me, a good thing with over 230 bats to get through. Robert Irvine and some helpers went off with a few bags of processed bats a few times to release them, so when

we finished the last bats there were almost none left to be released.

We finished up around 10 p.m. with a final count of 237 bats of three species spread over 23 boxes, far more boxes than usual for any time of the year

Box	Bats	Species	Adult		Escaped
			M	F	
C36	34	Gould's	10	24	3
C43	32	Gould's	9	23	1
	2	Freetail	1	1	
C16	29	Gould's	3	26	
C37	28	Gould's	1	27	1
C32	18	Gould's	3	15	
C05	16	Gould's	3	13	1
C08	9	Gould's	1	8	
C13	7	Freetail		7	
C42	7	Gould's	2	5	
	6	Freetail	1	5	
C15	6	Freetail	2	4	
C35	6	Gould's	2	4	
C25	5	Gould's	1	4	
C27	5	Gould's	4	1	
C28	5	Gould's	3	2	
	1	Lge Forest	1		
C29	5	Gould's	2	3	
C17	2	Gould's	1	1	
	2	Freetail	2		
C14	3	Freetail		3	
C40	2	Gould's	1	1	
C09	2	Gould's	2		
C30	2	Lge Forest		2	
C07	1	Freetail	1		1
		Gould's			
C22	1	Gould's	1		
C34	1	Gould's		1	
	<b>237</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>7</b>

Species distribution was much as usual, dominated by Gould's, with a growing number of Freetails and sometimes a few Large Forest bats

	Apr 07	Apr 08	Apr 09
Gould's	140	208	207
Freetail	10	23	27
Large Forest	17		3
<b>Total</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>237</b>

Compared with previous April results, this year has a small increase, less than the big growth of most Aprils

	2003-4	2004-5	2005-6	2006-7	2007-8	2008-9
Bats	101	137	148	167	231	237

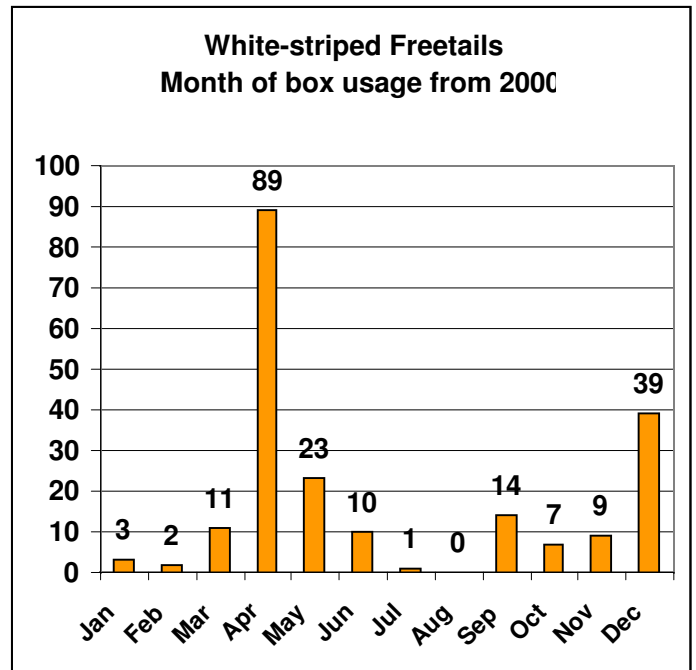


**Clare Crane**

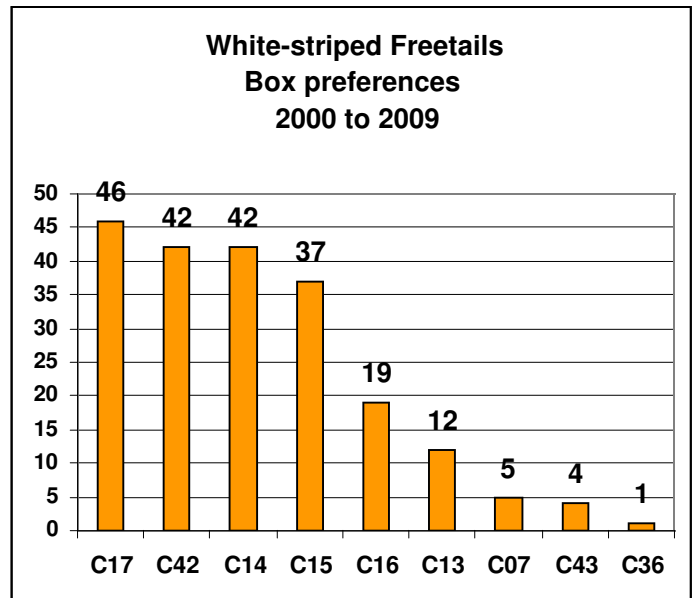
### Freetails in boxes

The first one appeared in C17 in Jan 00, the second in C15 in April '00, and that was it for a full year. Since then they have become a regular part of our catch each year, fluctuating up and down for a bit but steadily growing since 2006. We now have 208 capture records of a large number of individual bats, of which Natasha has been keeping an identification record

Others get a bum-shave to mark them as different. They have strong preferences about the season in which they are prepared to make use of our boxes, heavily concentrated in April, totaling 60% in autumn.

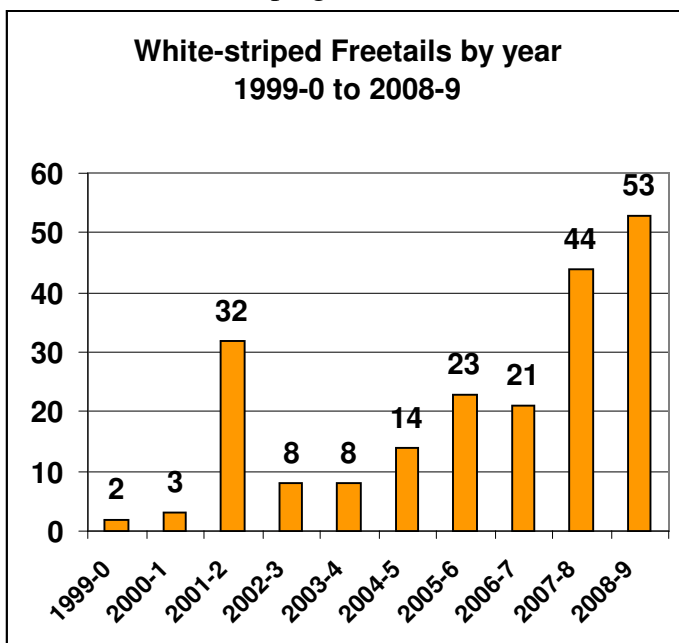


They also have strong preferences for particular boxes, and have used only 9 of our 37 boxes. 90% of them have been found in 5 boxes:



C42 has rapidly increased in usage since installation in August 2005, and for the last two years has had more Freetails using it than any other box.

**Next box check: Sunday 21 June, 2 p.m.**  
**Out winter solstice meeting**



Some have unusual markings, which makes them easily recognizable whenever they are caught in a box.

