

Box check: 11 October 2009

For a little while it seemed as though just Natasha and I were there to do this month's work but two new recruits found us, Kim Downs and Austin O'Malley, Uni of New England PhD students recently moved to Melbourne, keen to get into bat field work



So we were able to operate two ladders, get through the boxes in half the time, and Kim is vaccinated so did all the bat extracting in my team



Natasha got caught up in show-and-tell with 2 groups of park visitors, eager to learn all about little bats



One box had two Freetails, and a very recently dead Gould's, which was one of our 10-year-olds, with a

bird band



By 5:30 we had about 3 kg of bats in bags on two "coat hangers" and drove up to the newly renamed Visitor Centre – now the Jack Lyale Conservation Learning Centre



Three other near-10-year-olds were among the 200 bats we caught



One of the Freetails had very distinct chest marking, with an irregular white patch, and had been captured before, as Natasha found it among her catalogue of Freetails. After the usual little feat, we got to work, as there were a huge number of bats to process, three of us assessing and Austin scribing. Just before we finished, Debbie arrived to help.



The team at work



We finished up long after 11 o'clock, driving down to the Pipes to release the many bags of bats and left the park near midnight. There were bats in 17 of the boxes. I didn't have time to work out the distribution of males and females but will get that from Natasha's records some time

Box	Bats	Species	Adult		Esc
			M	F	
C09	36	Gould's			1
C22	26	Lge Forest			
C38	25	Gould's			
C16	21	Gould's			
C06	20	Gould's			3
C35	18	Gould's			
C25	14	Gould's			
C32	13	Gould's			
C15	8	Freetail			
C28	4	Gould's			
C07	2	Freetail			
C13	2	Freetail			
C17	2	Freetail			
C27	2	Gould's			
C01	1	Gould's			
C03	1	Gould's			
C24	1	Gould's			
	196	Total			

Compared with previous October records, this is a large increase. Compared with the 7 bats captured in our first season, Oct 1994, the growth has been very large.

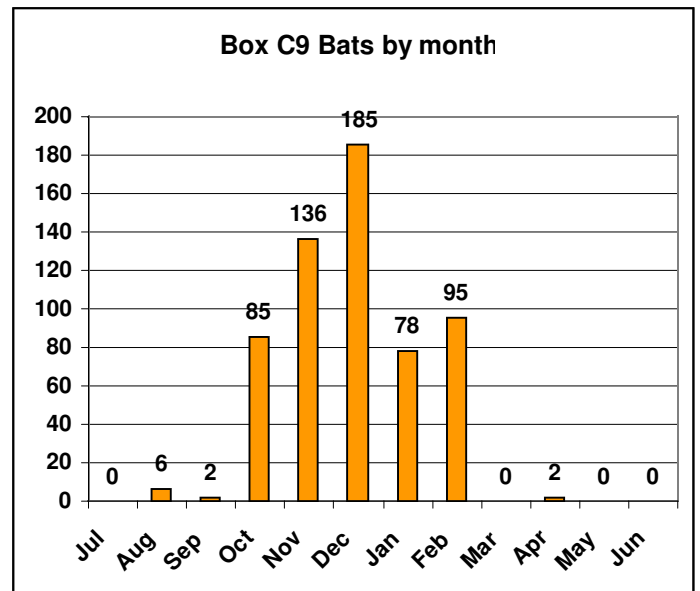
	2004-5	2005-6	2006-7	2007-8	2008-9	2009-0
Bats	101	136	125	141	163	196
Incr		35%	-8%	13%	16%	20%

Species distribution was fairly normal, with Gould's dominating the result, and a large increase in both Large Forest and Freetail bats

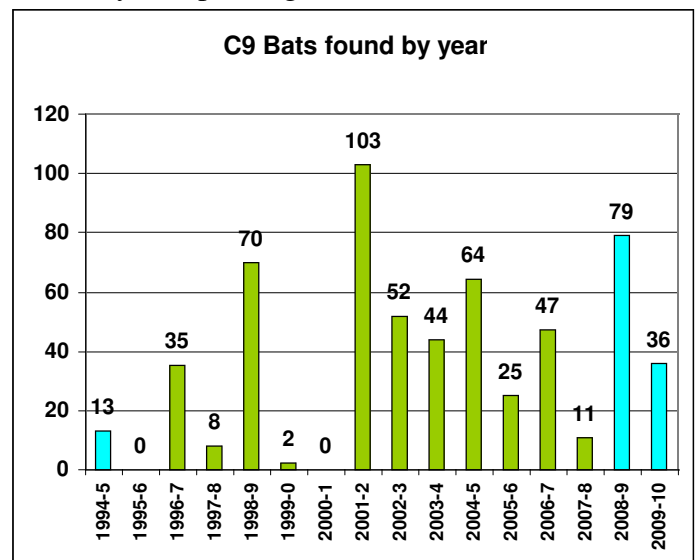
	Oct 07	Oct 08	Oct 09
Gould's	127	150	156
Large Forest	10	7	26
Freetail	4	4	14
Total	147	161	196

Box C9

This is one of the first 10 boxes set up in April 1992. We first found bats in it in Nov 94 and now have a tally of 589 bats, all Gould's. It is used only in the warm summer months



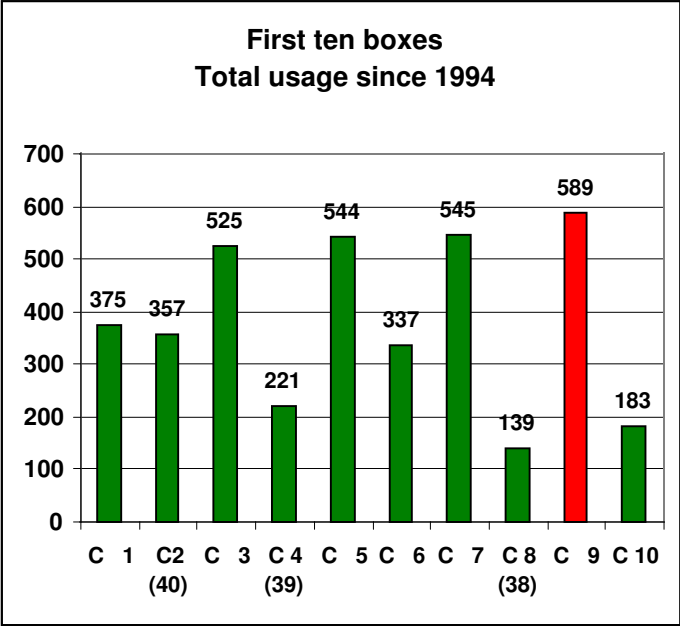
The bats' interest in this box has waxed and waned over the years, peaking in 2001-2 when there were



four large groups over the summer, the largest being 52 in December. This followed a year of zero usage. It has not attracted solitary male bats to anywhere near the extent of other boxes, but seems mainly to attract big groups of females during breeding season. Only two of the 16 groups under 10 were solitary bats

	0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69
Grp	16	4	3	5	1	2	1

It is the third most-used box, after C15 and C16, and the most-used of the first 10 boxes that have now been up for over 17 years. Boxes 7, 5 and 3 are also much more used than the remaining 6 of those 10.



**Next box inspection: Sunday 13 December
2 p.m.**