

Organ Pipes bat box check: 5 Dec 2010

We had a fine windless afternoon, but only a small team came to help with the work on our busiest day of the year, with many recently born young bats attached to their mothers: Natasha, Lisa, Jo Saich, Adam and X. We had two ladders and as usual my team moved along below the ridge, finding a big group of Gould's in C16.



C43 had been propped open in October to get rid of ants, but now had a resident Brushtail, much startled when a large human head appeared over the box rim.



My team was Jo and Adam



In C7 we found detached young, with their mothers milling about on their own, in a dense crowd. Jo and Adam tried to let them rediscover one another inside a bag, and it worked for a few of them as very young bats slowly reattached themselves to their mothers.



The landscape still looks very open over a decade since the big Black Wattles all died, as the young replacements are still struggling to grow to mature size.



Nearly all the female bats had twin young attached, some perhaps a month old, well-furred and half-grown, others probably born in the last couple of days.



We collected far fewer bats than usual, under 200 compared to the normal haul of over 400 in December then drove up to the Jack Lyale Centre well before 6 o'clock to set up our little feast and get to work.



Box 33 had a large group of Forest Bats, mostly Large, but one very old Southern with a bird-band, showing it must be at least 8 to 9 years old.

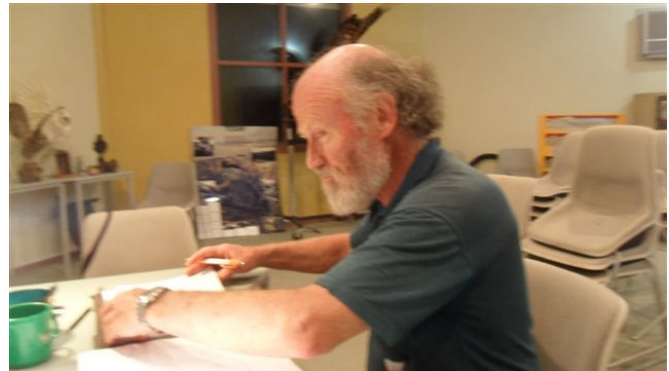


Debbie met us at the Centre, along with Fiona McLaren and her daughter Victoria Skipper. Natasha supervised Adam having his maiden exercise in bat assessing, and I supervised Fiona. Both rapidly grew in confidence



Because of all the very young juveniles not reuniting with their mothers, Natasha was keen to get them all back into boxes as fast as possible, so took a small team off to start that while the rest of us finished off the last few bags. The McLaren's went off home at 10 after the last bat was weighed and measured, then Adam and I drove down to join Natasha and Robert Irvine, and get a second ladder going to return mothers and pups into their boxes, which took over an hour, so we didn't get away until well after 11, despite having under 200 adult bats. To our surprise, boxes C5 and C7, despite having been emptied of bats only hours earlier, now had big groups of creched young, so two quite large maternity groups had been hiding elsewhere while we emptied the boxes.

Box	Bats	Species	Adult		Esc
			M	F	
C07	38	Gould's	6	32	
C16	32	Gould's	4	28	
C42	19	Gould's	1	18	
	2	Freetail		2	
C05	19	Gould's	1	17	1
C09	17	Gould's		17	
C27	17	Gould's	3	14	
C33	16	Lge Forest		16	
	6	Gould's		6	
	1	Sth Forest		1	
C01	8	Gould's		8	
C36	8	Gould's		8	
C41	5	Gould's	1	4	
C40	3	Gould's	3		
C22	2	Gould's	1	1	
C25	1	Gould's		1	
C34	1	Gould's	1		
C35	1	Gould's	1		
	196	Total	22	173	1



Robert scribing

The December results are under half of the haul for the past two years. The figures for 07 to 09 include juveniles, which explains most of the difference – did not get around to counting how many juveniles were recorded this year, so will correct the figures later for more valid inter-year comparison. If juveniles are omitted from the 08 figure of 423, it becomes 207, which is fairly close to this year's result.

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Bats	254	219	341	423	390	192
Incr		-14%	+56%	+24%	-8%	-50%

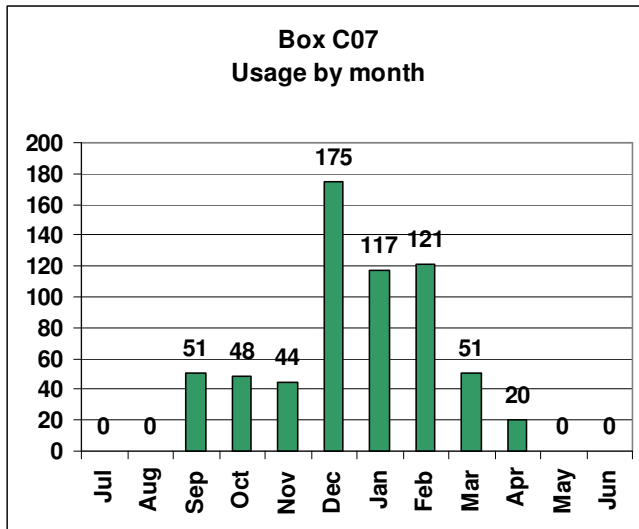
The species difference is mainly 110 Gould's missing this year, which may well be the juveniles. Omitting juveniles from Gould's in 08 would leave 168 adults, which is quite close to this year's 177

	Dec 07	Dec 08	Dec 09	Dec 10
Gould's	247	321	288	177
Large Forest	9	75	61	16
Sthn Forest		1		1

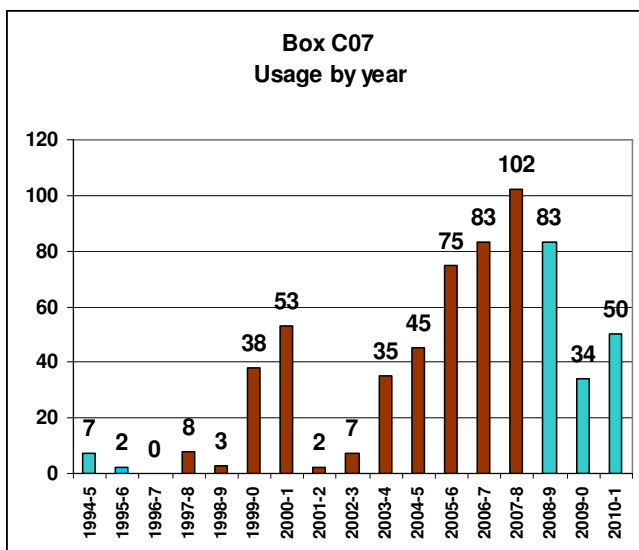
Freetail	2	26	24	2
Total	258	423	390	196

Box C07

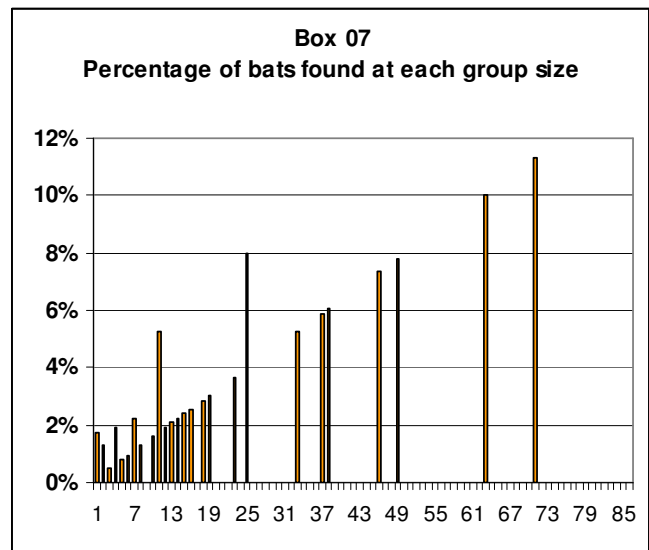
This is one of the first ten boxes that went up in April 92 and was among the first to be found with bats using it, in Nov 94. It has now had 627 bats recorded in it, the second most-used among the first ten Oregon boxes – the cluster of three most-used being boxes 9, 7 and 5, all with over 600 bats. Like the other Oregon boxes it is used only in the warmer months, and the bulk of usage is in summer (66%), with spring next (23%), then autumn (11%) and none at all in the 3 winter months.



Usage was irregular for its first decade but has picked up a lot since 2003 – 81% of bats captured in it have been found since Oct 03



Some quite large groups have been found in this box, the largest being 71 bats in Jan 06. The average group size is 13.9, consistent with the other Oregon boxes



65% of bats have been in groups of more than 20 bats and only 1.8% have been solitary bats. Since Jan 08, 18 Freetails have been found in the box in groups of 1 to 4 bats. The remainder of the bats have all been Gould's

The box has a fire-hose hinge, which after 18 years has finally shredded and the lid now sits loosely on top, so the hose needs replacing.

Thanks to Jo and Fiona for supplying the photos

Next box check will be on Sunday 13 Feb at 2 p.m.