

Bat boxes Organ Pipes NP 2 Mar 2019

We had a mild and windless day, just right and collected many bats from 24 of the boxes, nearly all Gould's as always



Two of the large boxes had glider nests in them.



And box 43 had two gliders, startled when the lid went up



Box C17 had a big group of Gould's.



The bat handlers arrived early and got started while the last boxes were being checked. We tried a new arrangement of hexagons with two handlers and a scribe, being rather short of scribes. It worked well



Lindy, Emma and Emmi and new recruit Simon Greppler (above); Dani (below)



And of course Pia and her mother, Mary. Louise Bonomi, wildlife carer (among other things) brought two hand-reared orphaned bats to be released: a

Gould's and a Small Forest Bat.



Andrew joined Kim and me at the same table



Kim Allan came along to continue working on his bat handling skills.



Several of the elderly bats were there again. This one is 91907, banded as a young bat in January 2013 so now 6 years old.



We slowly worked through the many bags. It was all over just before sunset. So we cleaned up the Visitor Centre and a good-sized group came down into the valley to release the bats, which all flew off quickly.



And next day, the line was loaded with newly washed bags.



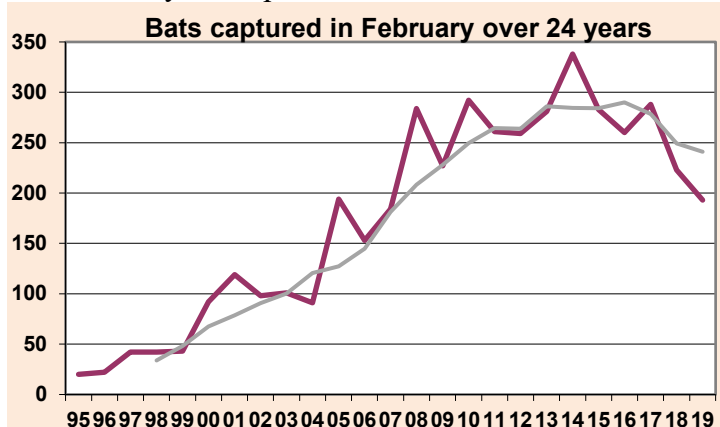
191 bats were captured from the boxes, plus Louise's two made 193 to be recorded and released.

Box	Bat	Species	Adult		Juvenile		No sex
			M	F	M	F	
C17	253	Gould's Freetail	102	141		1	
C47	23	Gould's	7	16			
C03	19	Gould's	5	10	2	2	
C16	18	Gould's	3	10		5	
C38	15	Gould's	1	12	1	1	
C44	13	Gould's	1	2	7	3	
C07	10	Gould's	3	6		1	
C22	8	Gould's	5	2	1		
C27	8	Gould's	1	6		1	
C29	8	Gould's		3	3	2	
C40	8	Gould's	2	6			
C35	7	Gould's		6		1	
C20	5	Gould's		5			
C34	4	Gould's		1	2	1	
C41	3	Gould's	1	1		1	
C09	3	Gould's	2	1			
C01	2	Gould's			1	1	
C36	2	Gould's	1	1			
C37	2	Gould's		1			1
C06	1	Gould's	1				
C13	1	Gould's	1				
C25	1	Gould's		1			
C39	1	Gould's	1				
C46	1	Gould's	1				
Lou	1	Gould's				1	
Lou	1	Sml Forst				1	
	193	Totals	48	105	17	22	1

Just over two adult females per adult male, about normal for this time of year. Nearly all the solitary bats were male, as usual, and in most boxes females outnumbered males. Most of the young born late last year were by then adult, but birthing was very late due to the drought so quite a few were immature still, sub-adult rather than juvenile.

February bats

The February catch peaked in 2014 at 338 and has been

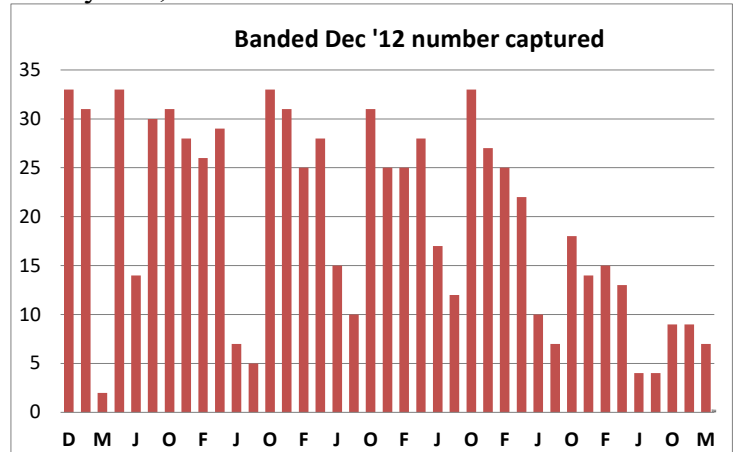


in bumpy decline each year since. The green line is a 4-year rolling average. Feb is the big month for escapes but this time only 1 bat from C33. In February Gould's have always dominated the catch, never below 95% and sometimes 100%.

There were 10 Freetails in 2011, but this year just 3.

Bats banded in Dec. 2012

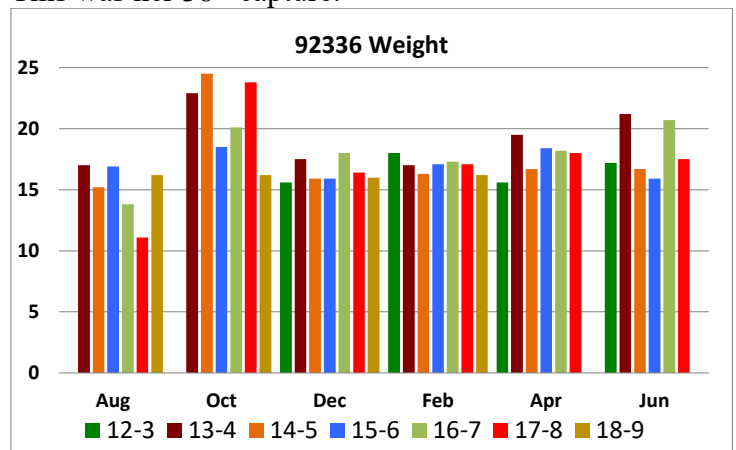
At the previous two box checks there were 9 of these elderly bats, but this month it was down to 7.



They included the matriarchal 92336 who has never been absent from a box check in over 6 years, so we have a very complete record of her. Nearly all the 7 have been captured 30 or more times. Very likely by next breeding season it will be down to just 2 or 3.

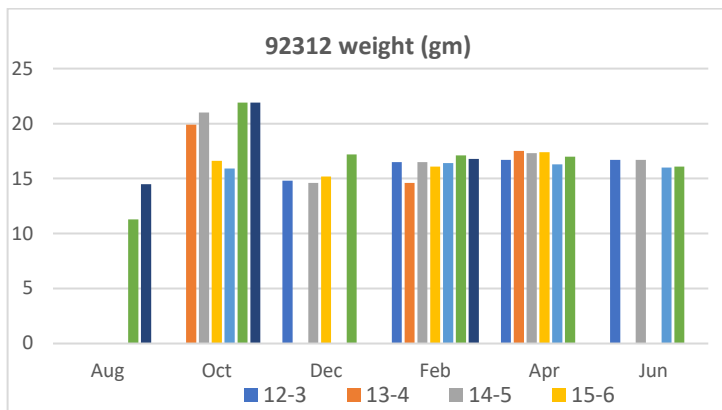
92336

Always in the boxes since first captured in Dec 2012, she was again in C16, one of her four preferred boxes. This was her 38th capture.



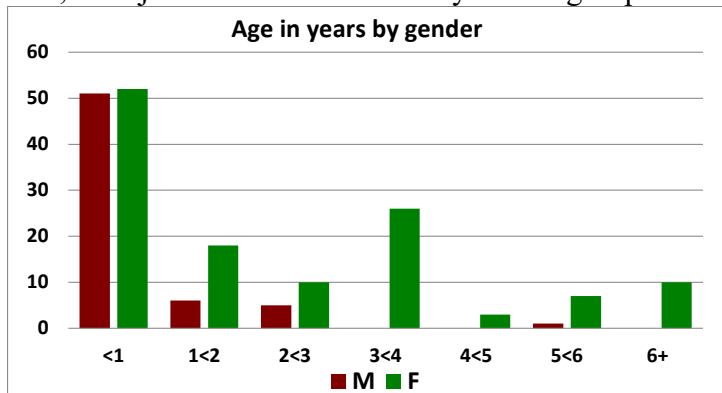
The one regular elderly male, 92969 was with the colony again, solitary in C39.

Another elderly female, 92312, now captured 31 times, doesn't seem to put on much weight in autumn, but manages okay without it

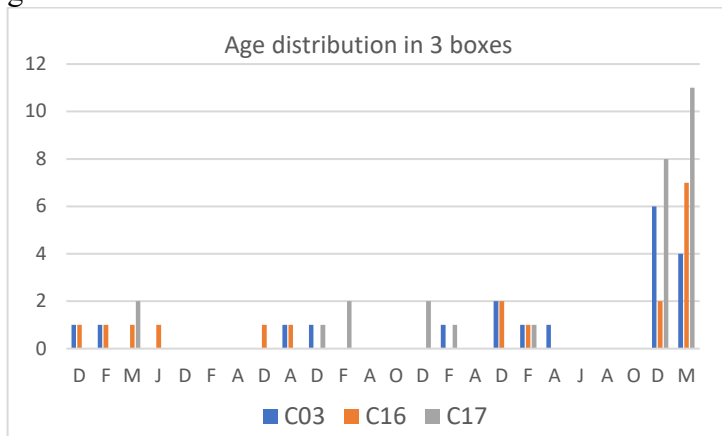


Community structure

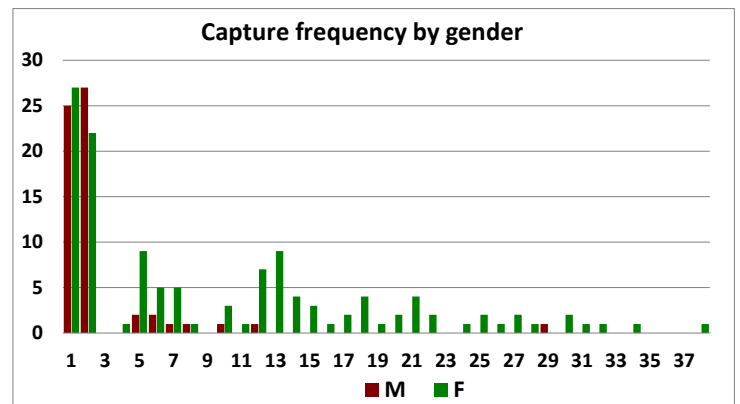
As usual, females are overrepresented among the older bats, with just one male in the 5-6-year-old group



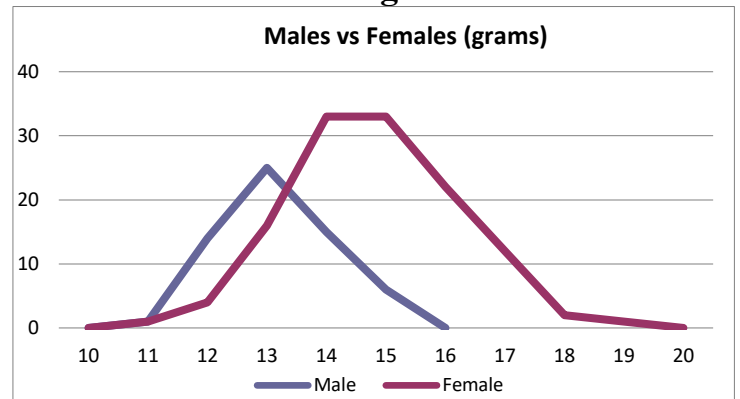
This is not just the pattern for the overall colony but also with most of the crowded boxes, which had 5-6 generations each.



There is a similar pattern in the records of capture frequency of individual bats, with all but one bat captured over 12 times being female.



Weight



As usual, females are heavier than males by about 3 grams, or 20%.

Next box check Sunday 28 April, from noon