

## **OBP Mainland Release Trial Program 2017**

**2 week update - 4 May 2017**

It's now two weeks since we released 11 OBPs at the Western Treatment Plant.

All the birds were carrying transmitters attached to the base of two tail feathers, and we are tracking them on average every second day. The light weight transmitters have a variable detection range, as low as 50m in dense vegetation, meaning we can expect not to find all individuals on all tracking attempts.

All but one of the birds have been detected at least once since the release. Since April 27<sup>th</sup> (one week after release), 8 of the birds have been detected. The birds have generally remained within 500m of the release site, however some have been detected up to 2km away at times. We are expanding the search area and search methods from this week in an attempt to locate the birds we have been missing.

In the first few days after release the birds were frequently alone. They have now started forming loose flocks and are now usually detected in groups of between 2 and 4. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May we detected our first wild bird at the site for this year – a female who has visited this site every winter since 2013. She was first spotted in an area frequented by the released birds and today the field team made the very exciting observation of her flying and feeding with two of our released males. This is exactly what we were hoping for.

Interestingly, none of the birds have been detected (by the camera traps) returning to eat any of the supplementary food we have continued to offer them since their release. However, the birds are frequenting areas where wild OBPs usually forage at this time of year, and we have observed them feeding on known OBP food plants including glaucous goosefoot, rush and twiggy turnip. Natural seed sources are in abundance at the site at the moment.

We are continuing to collect information on their movement patterns, habitat use, foraging behaviours and social groupings. We are also continuing to search for any additional wild OBPs arriving in the area. Our next progress update is due in two weeks.

The Mainland Release Team



Released OBP feeding on goosefoot.  
Photo: Steve Davidson