

EBBA NUS

A FRIENDLY REPORT ISSUED MONTHLY TO THE MEMBERS
OF THE EASTERN BIRD BANDING ASSOCIATION

D. Atmer
Recd.
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REACHING
OVER
375
BANDERS
EVERY MONTH

November, 1942

"LET US BAND TOGETHER"

Vol. 5, No. 11



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Secretary: Horace Groskin, 210 Glenn Rd., Philadelphia, Pa.
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DUE TIME AGAIN

No matter how coyly one phrases it, a reminder about due-payment time always boils down to the stark fact that annual dues are due. Such payments are the life-blood of any organization. Without them no group can function. The entire dues of the Eastern Bird Banding Association are used each year to spread cooperation as broadly as possible among all our members. With the exception of a nominal balance in the bank, all such collections are spent for the benefit of the whole. None of the officers receive any pay. Most of the money goes into the association's publications. If you pay \$3 a year, two dollars goes to the support of the quarterly, "Bird Banding", the extra dollar goes toward the publication of this, your monthly newsletter.

To illustrate to you as to where your dues go, it can be pointed out that it takes thirteen \$1 memberships to send you the NUS each month. In the course of a year, the funds from 156 members are so expended. To send out the annual due bills takes the income derived from another 10 members and the cost of a small amount of stationery, some envelopes etc., uses up whatever small balance may be left at the end of a year.

EBBA looks forward to the day when our membership is so strong that we may add a page or two to our news-letter or even support a lending library of educational slides for each member's use. Members are requested to send in their dues promptly, even before they receive a bill, as many of our members have already done. This will decrease our operational costs and bring closer the day when EBBA can offer more to our members for the small amount requested each year.

AUDUBON WILDLIFE TOURS

The National Audubon Society will again offer a series of 14 two-day Wildlife Tours at Bull's Island, S.C. These trips will begin on Nov. 16th and continue at intervals to the end of the year. Full particulars can be obtained from our member, John H. Baker, in care of the society at 1006-5th Ave., New York, N.Y.

GEORGE DOCK BUILDS ANOTHER HAWK TRAP

George Dock, Jr. of Scarsdale, N.Y. writes: "I made a fine hawk trap by simply rigging up a 1 inch mesh chicken-wire cage with a heavy wire frame 2' x 2' x 3' long as a Brenckle cell or chardonneret with a top-opening the full width of the cage and the hinged door set back so the opening is 2' x 15". The trigger is 8" below the top and a large flat cage of house sparrows is set beneath the door. In a month it has caught a Screech Owl, a Sparrow Hawk, a Long Eared Owl and a huge 'possum. It is so fixed that nothing can hurt the bait birds.

SQUIRRELS - DAD DRAT THEM

All banders have been long suffering, because a little gray pest can sit up on his haunches, nibble a nut, wave an attractive bushy tail at his audience, all at the same time. Sure, squirrels are "cute" and all very nice in their place, but that place is NOT around a banding station. They steal the bait, spring and ruin traps, apparently for the fun of it. Threats and scolding are idle gestures, because most squirrels can do some scolding themselves.

"Bob" Ungemah of White Plains, N.Y., writes that he has now taken over the agency for the "Havaheart" humane squirrel trap and hopes to help every bander with their squirrel problem. He states that he has had one of these traps for years and has caught "scads" of squirrels with it and 8 song birds. He says the trap is a "honey" and from the picture he sent, we see no reason for doubting him. The nut of the problem in these days of reduced transportation, to our mind, is what to do with the live squirrels after you catch them.

If memory serves us rightly, we remember the pathetic picture of William Pepper Jr.'s predicament reported in an early issue of the NUS. "Bill", then residing in a suburb of Philadelphia, decided to catch them alive and deport them hence. The quota in the local museums was soon filled up. He then called in the S.P.S.A., we believe, and they assisted him with the transportation for a time. He then struggled along unaided for a while, dutifully taking each days catch for a ride far out in the country-side. Alas, he was finally forced to throw in the sponge and close down his station. It was "Bill" Pepper's belief that in some manner the local squirrels broadcasted the news of this new amusement to all the squirrels in Pennsylvania. Squirrels of all sorts and sizes, their uncles, cousins and their aunts, their sisters and their brothers, along with uncounted others came tumbling into his traps, just to go for a ride.

NEWS FOR THE BANDERS

Harold S. Peters of Charleston, S. C. has just completed his 6th consecutive summer of work with waterfowl, woodcock and snipe in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. He reports a good crop of ducks being raised in eastern Canada and several wardens are banding immatures for him. After the war he hopes to increase such banding.

Howard Mahnken, one of our members now serving in the Coast Guard drops us a line to say that he is getting along in the service. He has been out in some Coast Guard craft occasionally and is making observations on sea birds. He writes that his buddies tell him that when a depth charge is dropped, besides killing a lot of fish, it also kills gulls and any other birds that are near the surface of the water where this depth charge explodes. He hasn't verified this with his own eyes, but if the concussion is as great as reported, such an occurrence may be possible. Does any other bander know anything on this?

While talking with an official of the Beaver Kill Trout Club, "Dick" Fischer of Flushing, N.Y. learned that a man in the next village had found a dead swallow wearing a band. Dick forthwith went to the next village and inquired around. He finally found the farmhouse where this chap, a vacationist like himself had been staying and got his home address. It seems that the man's home was in Baldwin, L.I., N.Y. Returning home to Flushing, Dick at once went to see the man in Baldwin, not only got the number and all the data but also got the old band. Yes it was a Barn Swallow Fischer had banded in the previous year at Beaver Kill, N.Y. and which had returned to within three miles of the place of banding, built a nest and had three young, when it was found dead. This is an example of what EBBA considers tracking a recovery down.

WATCH FOR THE WHITES OF THEIR EYES

William E. Schantz, a bander of Columbus, Ohio, has banded some 800 Bronze Grackles and has made observations on individuals from immaturity to 4 years of age. He writes:

"Nothing has been found to bear our Dr. Wood's belief, (EBBA NUS for June) that Grackles with "White" eyes are at least 2 years old. Many immatures have well cleared, (golden-white) irides by the time the 16th remiges of the first adult plumage has matured. Very rarely the dark irides of immature Bronze Grackles and Brown Thrashers are retained throughout life. I am very anxious to learn how other banders agree on this subject."

In fairness to Dr. Wood, it should be remarked that his comments on the eye-coloring of Grackles in the previous issue were offered more in a thought-provoking nature than as meant as a definite conclusion. It might be also mentioned that Mr. Schantz has closed his banding station and is now in the armed services.

FURTHER NOTES ON TOWHEES

In the October issue of the NUS, Mrs. Marie Dumont of Pequannock, N.J. gave some very interesting data on Towhees. It would seem that her total catch of this species and her return records show an overwhelming majority of males. Following publication of these records, other banders have submitted data on their Towhee banding. Among these, the records of the Manhasset Junior Bird Banding Club, sponsored by Jesse V. Miller of Manhasset, L.I., N.Y. are of exceptional interest.

Henry Ahrenhold, a member of this club, has very kindly compiled the data of the club's banding and submitted two charts. It appears that male Towhees predominate in their catches and every bird of this species that has returned to their station so far has been a male.

This club, connected as it is with the Manhasset Junior-Senior High School, is only active in each school year, being closed during July and August. Since April, 1940 to October this year, they have banded 140 Towhees. Of this number 75 were definitely adult males. The balance of the 65 other birds were made up of 9 definitely known females caught in the Spring of the years, and 56 others consisting of young birds and unrecorded sex. Since juvenal males are usually easy to recognize in the Fall, it may be assumed that nearly all these 56 birds were females. Working on such an assumption, the total of Towhees banded would break down into 75 males and 65 females, which seems plausible. Of the 114 Towhees banded previous to 1942, 10 returned, all males. Four of these males banded in the Spring returned in the Spring. The other 6 were all banded in the Fall and all but 1 returned in the following Spring. The bird returning in the Fall, 1 year after banding, was a juvenile when banded.

In the tabulation of the 3 years, the records for 1941 show a high catch of 80 individuals as against 46 for 1942, at Manhasset. At the Editor's own station, also on the north shore of Long Island, records show that more new Towhees were banded in 1941 than in 1942 and the catch in '41 was higher than in the previous 4 years. In comparison, Mrs. Dumont's records show she banded fewer new Towhees in '41 than in the previous 6 years. '37 and '39 were her high years when she banded 82 and 81 new Towhees respectively. Assuming that Towhees migrating from Long Island would skirt lower New York and cross over to N. J. by way of Staten Island, a glance at the map would show that Pequannock, N.J. is much too far north of this line of flight for the catches to be comparable, from a quantity standpoint. More data will follow from other stations. Why not send in your records?

"RUGGED INDIVIDUALISM" IN BIRDS

Thomas P. McElroy, Jr., a member of ours, formerly of West Chester, Pa., but now in the armed services, wrote us in September, saying goodbye to banding for the duration. In his letter, he commented on some of the friends he had made in the bird world through banding. His description of "Stumpy" is so good that EBBA wishes to share it with all our members.

"Stumpy" was a scrappy little Chickadee, whom I banded on January 30th. He repeated regularly and seemed only a little irritated that he had lost his tail in an accident on February 3rd. He was the most pathetically misshapen little ball of feathery temper-tantrums you could possibly imagine. However, by the 25th of that month he had managed to sprout three fourths of an inch of tail feathers. By March 20th, he had a tail of the proper length if not the proper color (judging by what all the best dressed Chickadees were wearing that Spring.) It was as white as driven snow. How I'd like to be able to stay around here this winter to see how he made out while he was away this summer.

"We also had a Song Sparrow friend with an acrobatic streak in his make-up. Every time we approached the trap in which he had wandered, (and this was as often as three times a day, almost every day) he would invariably stand on his head in the corner. Apparently, the bird's eye-view of myself and my wife was better upside down."

BANDED EXHIBITS IN MUSEUMS

The Pennsylvania State Museum of Harrisburg, has placed a mounted American Merganser on display wearing band No. B-700,000 with the following card:

THIS BIRD HAS A BAND

Numbered bands are placed on birds to determine

How long they live? How far they fly?

Where they migrate to?

Their habits of mating.

If they return to their old haunts.

DEAD BIRDS WITH BANDS SHOULD BE REPORTED

Send the band or the complete number, and the place where found and date, with your own name and address to the

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Department of the Interior

WASHINGTON, D.C.

The band letters are blackened to make them show up better. William L. Bryant, director of the Providence, R.I., Museum has placed a similar sign with a banded Wood Duck. EBBA wonders if the choice of species in this latter case is in recognition of the wonderful work our President, pro tem, Dr. Wood has done and is doing.

NEWS FOR THE BANDERS

Raymond S. Deck of Pelham, N.Y., a former member of our group, accidentally shot and killed himself on Oct. 1st, at his home while preparing to go on a field trip in the south. Mr. Deck was well known as an ornithologist and a writer of natural history articles.

Pvt. Thomas A. Imhof now overseas with the Army Medical Corps is now a Sergeant Imhoff. The censor has made so many holes in his recent letter that little more can be said. Congratulations, Tom.

THE FEEDING OF CAPTIVE HERONS AND GULLS

Since injured or sick herons or gulls are occasionally brought to banding stations for first aid and care, EBBA NUS has requested Stanley Grierson of Katonah, N.Y., who has had considerable success in this work, to give the members suggestions on feeding and the care of such cripples. In this issue he kindly gives us his data on Herons and Gulls and in a subsequent issue he will give us some tips on the care and feeding of Owls and Hawks. - Ed.

"Wild caught herons and gulls seem to show little or no fear of humans. They will feed readily a very short time after capture. All herons are primarily fish-eaters, creating the problem of where to obtain enough fish to keep them happy. A Black-crowned Night Heron will take at least 6 average sized smelts a day. A Great Blue Heron will often take as many as a dozen smelts a day, the Little Green Heron will eat 2 or 3 and a Herring Gull will need 4 to 6 smelts a day. Herons and Gulls do not seem to require gravel or grit.

"In captivity Herons and Gulls should be fed dead fish and fish cleanings obtained from a fish dealer. Sometimes a Heron will refuse to eat dead fish at first. The best thing to do then, is to get some live fish and put them in a pan of water. I have never seen a Heron that could resist spearing a live fish. If a few dead fish are also put into the pan, the bird will usually take them after spearing all the live ones.

"Herons can be made to eat meat and the procedure is not very hard. Once the bird is content to eat only dead fish it is time to break him in to eating meat. To do this add some strips of sliced lean raw meat to his daily fish diet. When the heron has eaten all the dead fish in the pan he will probably sample the meat, and will usually decide to eat it. A little cod-liver oil on the meat, occasionally, will also please him. This procedure should be kept up for several days, then feed him only the meat. CAUTION - If the Heron does not eat all meat at the time of feeding, remove the meat at once, otherwise all the blood will be washed out into the water. If the bird eats this bloodless meat it may make him very ill and death may even result.

"The best plan is to feed the Heron all he will eat at one feeding, giving him meat most of the time, but allowing him fish, clams taken from the shell, frogs and crawfish at least twice a week. Large fish should be cut into strips. Herons also are fond of mice, either dead or alive, and will regurgitate the fur in pellets.

"When feeding all meat diet, it is better to feed the meat on a plate and not in a pan of water. In a short time, the bird will feed from the hand, but watch out for that bill! I kept a Little Green on a meat diet for 8 months after which he was released in excellent condition. He ate all kinds of meat, sliced raw beef, horse meat, pig liver, beef heart, and parts of dead animals, such as rabbits and squirrels. In a pinch they will eat canned salmon.

"Wild Herons have a way of spearing at one's eyes when first caught, so the best plan is to grab him gently by the neck and hold his body under your arm."

Stanley Grierson, Katonah, N. Y.

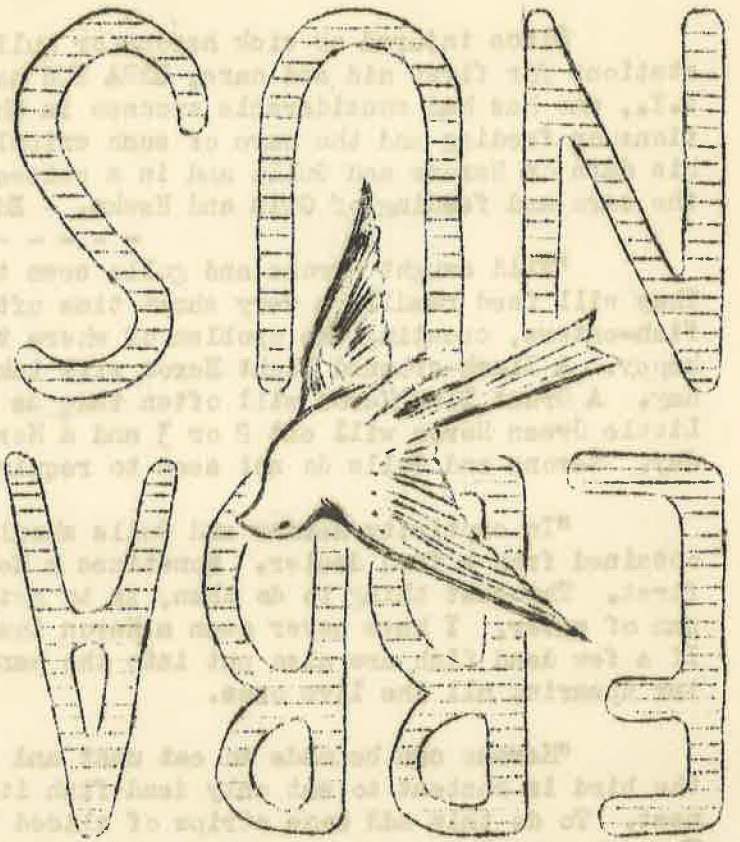
A STATION TO STATION RECOVERY

A Song Sparrow banded by our member, R. T. Fuller of Wintertown, N.Y., on Oct. 25th, 1941 was captured by our member, Ralph E. Wetzel of Boiling Springs, Pa. (about 60 miles north of Maryland) on March 3rd, 1942.

HUNTINGTON, I.I.-N.Y.

Geoffrey Gill, Editor - 24 Overlook Drive

Albany, New York
New York State Museum
Prof. Dayton Stoner



Sec. 562 P. L. & R.



Report a dead bird wearing a band, when found, to

FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE

WASHINGTON, D. C.



A REACTION TO BIRD BANDING
A bird banded by our member, Mr. J. J. Miller of Westport, N.Y., on
Oct. 25, 1941 was captured by our member, Mr. E. J. Jones of Berlin Springs,
Pa. (about 60 miles north of Westport) on March 1, 1942.