

EBBA NEWS

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

"Let Us Band Together"

Reaching Over 385 Banders Every Month

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December, 1945

Ten cents a copy

One dollar a year

Vol. 8, No. 12

DR. FRANK M. CHAPMAN DIES AT THE AGE OF 81

Funeral services were conducted in the First Presbyterian Church, Englewood, N. J. on November 19th for Dr. Frank M. Chapman, curator emeritus of the Department of Birds in the American Museum of Natural History, New York. Dr. Chapman, who died in St. Luke's Hospital on November 15th, was considered America's foremost ornithologist.

Dr. Chapman's love for birds began in his boyhood. Even when he took his first job in a bank, he would rise early to study bird life before leaving for business. In 1888 he joined the staff of the museum as an assistant.

Over his more than 50 years' career as curator, educator, explorer, collector and conservationist, Dr. Chapman wrote many books and numerous magazine articles on birds. Many people considered him the most influential man since Audubon in arousing interest in ornithology.

Building the Bird Department in the Museum of Natural History from a single room on the top floor of the museum to a large wing of its own, Dr. Chapman was instrumental in conceiving the idea of the habitat exhibition. From a few stuffed birds which he "inherited" when he became the curator, he built the ornithological department to 750,000 birds, representing all parts of the world.

In 1933 he received the Brewster Medal of the American Ornithologists' Union, one of the highest ornithological awards in the country. He was a Charter Member of The Eastern Bird Banding Association and countless other ornithological clubs and societies all over the globe.

A son, Major Frank M. Chapman, Jr. of the Army, concert and opera singer and husband of Gladys Swarthout, survives.

(Editor's note: - Over a score of years ago, the editor worked for Dr. Chapman and in looking back over the years, he wishes that all his successive superiors had been as patient and understanding as Dr. Chapman was with a stumbling and green beginner. -)

MEMBERSHIP LIST TO BE PUBLISHED

In the early part of the year, EBBA will publish for all members a complete list of all paid-up members.

It is essential that the Treasurer have all addresses correct and complete. For those members in the Armed Services, their home address or a permanent address of their choosing should be used. Please send this information to the Treasurer, Merrill Wood, 811 North Allen Street, State College, Pennsylvania.

NEWS FOR THE BANDERS FROM HERE AND THERE

The Nov. 24th issue of Liberty magazine contained a fine illustrated banding article by Herbert G. Moore. It featured the banding station of EBBA's Secretary, Horace Groskin at Ardmore, Pa. with photographs of his place and bird pictures taken in color by Hal H. Harrison, president of the Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania.

The Pennsylvania Game News for October carried an illustrated article by Dr. Harold B. Wood, EBBA's President entitled "The Records of a Professional Duck Hunter. This paper contains the records of the waterfowl shot by one professional gunner over a period of 53 years which amounted to 17,000 birds.

G. Hapgood Parks of Hartford, Conn. had a dandy paper in the Maine Audubon Society Bulletin for October. This article relates his banding activities during July and August at Millbridge, Maine for 3 years. This paper is probably the first of 2 papers and is restricted to his work with land birds only. In the three 2-month periods he has banded a total of 605 land birds with Barn and Bank Swallows accounting for more than half of the total. Elsewhere in the same issue it is noted that Mr. Parks is again active in Maine and in July banded some Ospreys on one of the many islands along the Maine coast.

Raymond G. Fleetwood of Round Oak, Ga. completed his Swift banding for the season with a total of 8,245. He took 93 returns and states that the recoveries contained no unusual records although he did take 2 birds banded in Kitchener, Ontario. He has added 2 new traps to his regular station equipment of the trip-step type and would like to obtain another government Sparrow trap. Anyone know where there is one for sale?

Newman S. Shirk, formerly with the Patuxent Research Refuge at Bowie, Md. has obtained a banding permit and has started his own station at Concordville, Pa. EBBA wishes him every success and feels that he is on the right track for he joined our association almost as soon as he baited his first trap.

A recent card informs EBBA that our member, Claude White of Plainfield, N. J. passed away this summer.

Lt. B. Frank McCamey of MacDill Field, Tampa, Florida is another new member to join the association. Lt. McCamey does most of his banding in the winter months and states that as yet he has captured no birds which have been banded in the north. The banders "up north" accept this challenge, Lieutenant, and will promise to band a few more birds every day, if you in turn will trap a few more each day.

Francis H. Orcutt, formerly of Niagara Falls, N. Y. is now residing at Rochester, N. Y. This summer, with Malcolm Lerch of Penn Yan, N. Y. they did a nice bit of Tree Swallow banding in the Penn Yan marshes.

Edwin Mason of the Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, Easthampton, Mass. sends word that October was a good month with White-crowns at his station. He banded a total of 55 and on the 13th of the month captured 23 new birds as well as a repeat. "Beech" Bowdish of Demarest, N. J. banded 115 White-throats.

"Hank" Van Laar, Ph. M. 3/c, formerly at the Naval Medical School at Bethesda, Md. is now on the staff of the Naval Hospital at Great Lakes, Ill.

FIFTEEN HUNDRED SQUIRRELS AT A BANDING STATION

Noting that Horace Groskin of Ardmore, Pa., has averaged 1,000 new birds a year for 8 years, EBBA speculated as to the reasons for this splendid record. A visit to his banding station some years ago, proved that he was located in an ideal spot and had a fine variety of traps. One point that duly impressed this visitor was the abundance of food made available for the birds. Could this be the reason for Mr. Groskin's amazing record. On the other hand, wouldn't such quantities of food attract small animals to the detriment of banding and his equipment. EBBA wrote to inquire into this matter. Here is what Mr. Groskin replies:

"You are right in thinking that animals bother me at my banding station. In fact, I capture almost as many large and small animals as I do birds. For instance I have trapped more than 1,500 gray squirrels, 35 red squirrels, 23 raccoons, 40 opossums, 4 skunks, about 300 chipmunks, 150 white-footed mice, 35 meadow mice, 2 shrews and a lot of rabbits. The larger animals, such as raccoons, opossums, squirrels, etc., were all transferred without injury through the cooperation of the Pennsylvania Game Commission and the assistance of my daughter, so you see it is just as you say, the animals bother the station to a very great extent, which almost discourages banding operation, but I persist nevertheless. In order to capture the larger animals without injuring them, I had to have a special metal trap built which is very effective.

"As to the amount of food I use during the average winter: Altogether I use about 120 lbs. of seeds of which 80 lbs. are sunflower and the rest mixed. I also use about 10 or 12 lbs. of suet and a small amount of raisins, and in very cold weather, I also add bread crumbs. Just now, (Nov. 21st) I am operating 21 traps, most of which are 2-cell and the type that takes considerable numbers of birds such as government sparrow traps, etc."

VISITING PHOTO ALBUMS PROVING POPULAR

Five Visiting Photo Albums are now visiting about one-fourth of our membership and the 6th Album will be launched soon. EBBA is very pleased with the reception this idea is received and wishes to thank all members who are helping the plan along. Two or three photographs arrive at headquarters each week. Recently a pleasant surprise was a series of 4 fine photos from Louisiana. These depict E. A. McIlhenny and some views of his excellent traps and catches at Avery Island. From Canada, Forrest Dilling has sent 2 splendid "snaps", one of himself and another of his traps. From New Jersey Mrs. Betty Carnes of Tenafly has sent a dandy series of views of herself and animal visitors at her station, most of them in full colors. From Maryland, from Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey again, Photos are coming in and add to the fun. Many banders write to say that an album has arrived at their station and that they have added a photo or two and that they are sending it along. Remember there is always room for one more picture. The more photos we have, the more albums we have and consequently the more visits the albums can make. Send a picture in today.

DUES ARE DUE

To write "Dues are due," is a sort of a mournful reminder, but not with EBBA. The officers consider that the membership has paid them a very high compliment when it is learned from the treasurer, that 3 weeks after the notices were sent out, 52 percent had already paid up for another year. Did you?

OLD AGE-RECORDS OF BIRDS ARE SNARLED UP

The List of old age-records of banded birds as it appears in the October issue of EBBA NEWS has been so thoroughly knocked to pieces during the last month or so, that time must be requested to pick up the bits, check the claims and counter claims.

The 13-year old Chimney Swift banded in August, 1924 and recovered in 1937, turns out to be a bird banded in 1934 and the record goes back to Mr. Musselman with his 12-year old bird. Correspondence by Josiah Keely to Mr. Johnston in California and letters to W. Va. and S. C. have cleared up this matter.

The record of a 21-year old Osprey banded by Howard Cleaves is bona-fide and appears in print at least twice. A record of a Song Sparrow banded in 1907 and returning in 1925, which would make it 18 years old, is something else again, and is being checked. Probably this is another error like the Swift and it was banded in 1917 and is 8 years old, which would seem more plausible.

Many of the age-records for hawks and sea birds will probably move up into higher brackets as more longevity records are revealed. Then there are cases where birds have returned again since the original record was submitted. For instance Raymond J. Middleton of Norristown, Pa., has moved his record for Tufted Titmouse to 7 years and 3 months, - the old bird having nested at his station again this summer and entered his traps.

EBBA would like to remind all members that in sending in old age records, please be sure the information is as complete as possible. The date the bird was originally banded, its age if possible when banded, at least whether it was a nestling or adult, the name of the bander, the date and place of the last recovery. The band number should always be given when ever possible.

A MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL

Falling snow reminds us it is time to wish all a very Merry Christmas. EBBA wishes there was some new and sparkling manner to say this, in our 8th issue; Some way to express appreciation for the friendly cooperation extended to us in the last 12 months.

EBBA has shown a gratifying growth in 1945 and has accomplished many things not attempted heretofore. Yet, there is much that we would like to do for all the members.

Christmas time is a gift time. As a gift to the association, may we call upon each member to send the name and address of a prospective member to the officers of the association, so that they can write them. If we can increase our membership just a little bit more, we can increase the size of our monthly news-letter during 1946. With 2 more pages, much more of the splendid material that is sent in can be used. EBBA treasures this material and is enthusiastic over the spirit that prompted it's arrival. May we extend to you a Merry, Merry Christmas and in the words of Tiny Tim, say, "God bless us, one and all."

NIGHT LIFE AT WINTERTON, N. Y.

On 3 succeeding mornings, Raymond T. Fuller has found an infant 'possum in his traps. As each is escorted a mile away across a big stream, where do they come from? The mother is expected at any moment.

CAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS LEARN BIRD IDENTIFICATION

IN THE CLASS ROOM TODAY?

By J. V. Miller, Manhasset, (N. Y.) High School

EBBA NEWS started something when it published Paul Bartsch's comments concerning the values of Biology in "the good old schools" compared with today's educational offerings.* There are at least a few of today's teachers who agree with Bartsch. "Know 50 birds and 50 plants" used to be one of the aims in by-gone days. How much could be taught students about birds in a well-planned unit of school work, lasting about a month, was a question that captivated the writer's interest. Here is what happened in May-June, 1945 at the Manhasset High School, L. I., N. Y.

Seventy boys and girls taking 9th grade General Science, a required subject, were used in a study. Most of them were 14 to 15 years of age.

In order to determine the state of their knowledge concerning birds at the beginning of the study a pre-test was given. Identifications were based on the best colored pictures of birds available, such as National Geographic, Life, etc. The pictures were projected on a screen in a darkened room. The size of each bird was given and about 1 minute per bird was allowed for identification.

The results were about as expected. The average student knew 4 or 5 birds, no more.

A different set of pictures was then used for teaching purposes for the next 4 weeks. Discussion of plumage characters, practice quizzes and contests were used. Pictures were shown many times. Three field trips were conducted with attendance on such trips strictly voluntary.

In June a final test was given, using the same pictures and technique as for the pre-test. The results were encouraging. While it is agreed that identification in the field would give a more accurate picture, it does suggest a method of teaching birds to large groups where extensive field trips are impractical.

The following summarizes the results. Fifty species of birds were used in the test, so a perfect paper would score 50. Only $\frac{1}{2}$ a credit was given for partial identifications where "warbler" or "sparrow" was omitted. (White-throat gave $\frac{1}{2}$ credit)

Only 11 of the 70 recognized less than 21 birds; 45 students recognized 31 to 50. There were 25 students who knew 41 or more. Members of the local Junior Bird Banding Club ranked highest, as might be expected. The lowest score made by a club member was 46**.

It would therefore appear that within the short period of 4 to 5 weeks, high school boys and girls can be given sufficient training in bird identification to enable them to recognize many of our common land birds. Such a nucleus is usually all that is needed to enable people of average interests and intelligence to continue under their own steam. So here is a partial answer to the question raised last March.

* EBBA NEWS, March, 1945, - Vol. 8 No. 3, p. 5

** 5 members of the club were members of these classes and wrote the same tests.

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