

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Although this issue is actually the September-October issue for 1953, it is being prepared on January 9, 1954. Future issues will be forthcoming soon, and it is hoped that we shall be able to get on a current basis. At present, the greatest difficulty we have to face is shortage of material; by the time we get caught up, there will be no material on hand for future issues--unless members get busy and send something to the Editor, so why not try to prepare something which you think may be of interest to EBBA members.

Despite the tardiness of EBBA NEWS due to the inability of the Editor to find sufficient time in which to carry out his duties, members have been very kind in bearing with him in this difficulty, and, in view of this circumstance, the unusually prompt return of dues after the Treasurer's mailing of bills was most gratifying. Likewise, the increase in the number of members who took out sustaining memberships was both surprising and gratifying.

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ABOUT THE ANNUAL MEETING

As you know, the 1954 Annual Meeting of EBBA will be held in Baltimore, Maryland, Saturday and Sunday, April 3 and 4. Details will be announced later. President Raymond J. Middleton has appointed the following as the committee on local arrangements: Orville Crowder, Chairman; Seth H. Low; Chandler Robbins, and Richard Cole.

The program committee has not been announced, but in the meanwhile the Editor would suggest that members think about topics or papers which they might like to present or about symposia which they would think of interest. The Editor is sure that Ray Middleton will welcome any suggestions and that he will pass them on to the appropriate persons.

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CONCERNING BANDS AND BANDERS

In the February issue of EBBA NEWS, pages 3 to 7, appeared a

letter from Seth H. Low, of the Banding Office, concerning the new policy of the Fish and Wildlife Service concerning the use of colored bands and of additional metal bands on the same leg. In addition, comments of other persons were presented.

Immediately upon receipt of the issue in question, Mr. C. Hapgood Parks, 99 Warrenton Avenue, Hartford, Conn., wrote the Editor, and the major portion of his provocative letter is reproduced herewith. Mr. Parks wrote:

"I would like to back you up very emphatically when you say too many banding permits are getting into unqualified hands!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

"We are trapping altogether too many banded birds with improperly adjusted bands. Some birds, like the Evening Grosbeaks and other strong-billed species, do mutilate some of the bands, of course, but, judging from our own studies of repeats and returns, the percent of bands mutilated by the birds themselves is insignificant. I feel that altogether too much stress is being placed, by the 'hobby' banders, on 'I banded more birds than you did', and in consequence the birds are endangered by too many bands which are poorly adjusted because these banders are not willing to take the greater time that it takes to adjust them properly and safely.

"Your suggestion that regional associations cooperate in the screening of applicants for banding permits is the very best possible. Further than that, I would add the recommendation that those same regional associations cooperate to the extent of examining the work of banders within their respective regions. After all, we are hoping to improve the welfare of the birds, are we not?"

"I believe that the use of two metal bands on the same leg is almost certain to be detrimental to the bird if it is unfortunate enough to survive natural hazards over a considerable period. I feel sure that the example which you cited of the 'flange' formation is more typical than exceptional. Since I have handled but two birds so banded, and these for less than a year each, I can not provide factual data. Just tap the edges of these bands repeatedly, though lightly, and see what happens. This is why we prefer plastic bands for local identification purposes. Just why the Banding Office frowns on

plastics I've never discovered.*

"We have had very good luck with plastic bands. Just as in the case of the metal bands, it is a matter of careful fitting and proper sealing. A few seconds used to roll the plastic band after it has been placed around the tarsus fits it snugly and comfortably. A drop of acetone, a few additional seconds of holding the fitted band while the acetone evaporates, and the job is done. We have had at least three instances of Evening Grosbeaks returning to us with their aluminum bands missing but with the identifying plastics intact. And we have proof that this species DOES remove bands from its own legs when the No. 2 size is applied."

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HAVE YOU PAID YOUR DUES?

Dues for 1954 are now payable. If you haven't paid up yet, why not send your check for \$2.00, or more if you wish, to Merrill Wood, Treasurer, 811 N. Allen St., State College, Penna.

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BANDING BARN OWLS

by Howard Drinkwater, Old Road, Whitehouse, N.J.

(Editor's Note: The foregoing was mailed by Mr. Drinkwater in August of 1952 and received by the Editor in December 1953. Therefore, in addition to the original article, we have a newer one bringing the project up to date.)

Barn Owls, according to the last release I have from the Fish and Wildlife Service, have not been banded in the numbers that one might expect for a bird of such general distribution.

From Paul M. Stewart's article in THE AUK for July 1952, I find that of the total number of Barn Owls banded (2298), only 336 individuals yielded returns, and of that number only 21 were reported for my own state, New Jersey.

*Perhaps Seth Low will comment on this.—Ed.