

was observed feeding the young birds, who doubtless followed their parent into the trap.

From this time up to March 23, 1925, no record of these birds was secured, but on this date there was taken from the same trap the parent bird, No. 125226. Five days later, there were taken from the same trap two of the three young birds banded July 20, 1924, Nos. 125225 and 125227. These were secured four hours apart.

Of this family of young birds, 66.66 percent have returned to their immediate place of birth. This fact is of interest as perhaps bearing on the widely-held view that dispersal of the young by their parents from the place of their nativity is a law of nature adopted for the good of the species by preventing overcrowding.

Another aspect of the matter is of equal interest, namely, that these three birds apparently arrived at about the same time, suggesting that as a family group they have kept together during the winter season and returned to their home in Cohasset together, although of course there is no definite proof of this.

Still another aspect of the record is the coming of an adult and young birds at nearly the same time, as shown above, thus indicating that while it may be customary in the case of some species for old birds to much precede the young in the spring migration, among Song Sparrows this is not universally the case.—LAURENCE B. FLETCHER, Brookline, Massachusetts.

It is not an infrequent occurrence, during the process of taking a bird from the gathering cage, to have it escape by passing out along the hand at one of the upper corners. This trouble may be remedied by cutting a four-inch circular opening through the rectangular door, or slide, closing and opening the same with an auxiliary, superposed sliding-door running under two beveled strips of pine, say one-half inch thick, tacked to the door, one above and one below the circular opening. Certain types of gathering cages may require that the superposed door should slide vertically instead of horizontally.

Notes on Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers.¹ Between November 21, 1923, and March 14, 1925, there were banded at my station in Dover, Massachusetts, among other species, twenty-one Downy Woodpeckers (*Dyobates p. medianus*) and six Hairy Woodpeckers (*Dyobates v. villosus*) all doubtless in winter plumage, when banded. These birds were taken in a tree pull-string trap, six inches by six inches by twelve inches, made of No. 3 ($\frac{1}{3}$ inch mesh) hardware cloth. It is placed on an oak tree, five feet from the ground, and the back is the tree itself. It is closed at the top, but the bottom is hinged, forming a door, with a wire eight inches long attached in such a manner that when the door hangs directly downward the wire projects upward parallel to the long dimension of the trap and lying against it outside, so that when the string, which is attached to the free end of the wire, is pulled, the door closes. The string runs through the window-casing to my dining-room, some twenty feet distant. The trap is baited with suet, the woodpeckers entering it readily, as shown by the fact that on March 22, 1925, I took eight repeats, (Nos. 120705 and 129730 twice each).

Downy repeats total forty-seven. Of these No. 86726, a female, banded November 21, 1923, repeated eight times, four times in 1924, and three

¹ These notes are a condensation by the editor of my banding station records.

times in 1925, the last time on March 22d, so that she is now nearly two years old if she was born in 1923. A male Downy, No. 86727, banded on the same day, repeated six times, the last time January 18, 1925. Many of the Downies, and perhaps all, come at intervals throughout the nesting-season, but I do not trap them during the summer. They doubtless nest near by. It is a matter of surprise to find that, of the twenty-one Downies banded, over seventy-one per cent were females. Whether this ratio is accidental or not, I have no knowledge. Confirmation or denial is needed, and bird-banders are in a position to secure the facts. If the ratio is confirmed, it is to be expected that a disparity of the sexes so unusual must be reflected in the habits of the species, although habits attributable to such inequality have not been discovered.

On a number of occasions a young Downy followed its mother to my banding station, where she fed it with three or four fragments of suet. These were placed in the mouth of the young after the manner of Robins, no evidence of regurgitation being observed.

Of the six Hairy Woodpeckers banded, four were females. This ratio of two to one is very interesting, but, as the number of this species banded is so small, the excess of females may well be accidental. Two of the females repeated once, Nos. 120712 and 243016. This species is much less abundant about my station, and traps less easily. They, in common with the Downies, pretty surely nest near by.—Mrs. ARTHUR B. EMMONS, 2d, Dover, Massachusetts, March, 1925.

Caution.—Our attention has again been called to the great need of accurately reading band numbers. To read them incorrectly is to introduce inexcusable error into scientific work, error which may lead to false conclusions on the one hand and on the other hand to the loss of important records.

It is best not to attempt to read numbers when they are wrong side up, and in all cases it should be kept in mind that some figures, only partially in sight (due to the band-surface being curved), may be easily mistaken for others. For example, figure 8 often appears to be the figure 3; figure 9 bottom side up, the figure 6; and, conversely, the figure 6 becomes figure 9. Figure 5, hastily read, may be reported as figure 6. In a dim light, figure 3 may be read an 8. The letter A, on certain series of numbers, issued by the Biological Survey, is likely to be overlooked as it is placed at the end of the line of letters instead of at the end of the number. A figure in a number is sometimes omitted.

The use of a lens in this work is recommended. Haste in banding birds and in reading band numbers make for errors, inadequate study, and careless and scanty note-taking.

Word has just come that Professor Frederick A. Saunders of Cambridge, Massachusetts, has recovered at Kittery Point, Maine, on March 30, 1925, Tree Sparrow No. 67250, banded by Mrs. F. D. Hubbard at New Haven, Connecticut, January 31, 1923. The distance between these two banding stations in a straight line is one hundred and sixty-nine miles. This record is unique as far as this Association is concerned on account of the distance from one station to the other. It is records of this sort that will enable us in time to know the details of a species's migration.