

GENERAL NOTES

The "Rawson-MacMillan Field Museum Expedition" to Band Birds.—Your Secretary has perfected arrangements whereby the forthcoming Rawson-MacMillan Field Museum Expedition to Labrador and Baffin Land will include bird banding as a part of its scientific investigations. Captain Donald B. MacMillan will take with him five thousand bands which the Biological Survey is now having made for him.

For several years Captain MacMillan has been one of Mr. E. H. Forbush's most trustworthy observers, and on this expedition he will personally take part in the banding work. A letter received from him on June 11, 1927, written at Freeport, Maine, contains the following details of his plans:

"We are leaving Wiscasset, Maine, on June 25th to cruise beyond the Arctic Circle following the Labrador and Baffin Land coasts. About September 1st we shall proceed south to Northern Labrador and there establish a permanent scientific station near the Eskimo village of Nain. Our banding will be done next June and July, 1928, on the young of the Glaucous and Great Black-backed Gull, Eider Duck, Coot, and Canada Goose especially."

A scientific staff will accompany him, consisting of Alfred C. Weed, Ichthyologist; Dr. Duncan D. Strong, Anthropologist; Sharat K. Roy, Geologist; Arthur S. Rueckert, Zoologist; Charles Sewall, Botanist; and Novio Bertrand, Taxidermist.

At a meeting of the Council of this Association held at the State House on June 7, 1927, Captain MacMillan, who will be in charge of the expedition, was elected a Vice President of the Northeastern Bird Banding Association, and as a member of this Association he will of course deposit copies of his banding records with our Recording Secretary.

A Partial Record of the Nesting of the Kingfisher.—On May 30, 1925, we found the nesting hole of a pair of Kingfishers (*Ceryle alcyon*) about a mile from Lake Asquam, New Hampshire, in the Town of Ashland. On May 31st, my husband, following the advice of Mr. Charles J. Maynard, made an opening into the nest cavity from a pit opened from the surface to a point about six inches in the rear of the nesting passage-way. When we had counted the eggs, seven in number, we filled the hole with sand and loam. The next time we visited it we found that some animal had dug through our filling material and destroyed two young birds. After this we put some big rocks into the opening, chinked them with pine needles, and replaced a couple of shovel-fulls of earth to finish off with.

Each of the five times we examined the nest the rocks, etc., had to be removed and replaced. If rocks are not used, skunks or other animals may dig out the soft earth and eat the young birds. A large bag of mosquito netting was placed over two saplings in front of the hole before the nesting hole was opened, the female immediately rushing out into the bag. She was then photographed and banded, No. 213220.

On June 13th the eggs were pipped, and on June 22nd the five remaining fledglings were banded, then nine days old. Their fat bare bodies and "flippers" of wings without any natal down gave them a most fantastic appearance. Their beaks were enormous and their eyes were not yet open.

On the fifth of July, when the young Kingfishers were twenty-three days old and were in nearly full juvenal plumage, we took the photograph

shown on the front cover of this number of the *Bulletin*. At this age they are very active and alert. They even made ludicrous efforts at "rattling," like their parents and seemed ready to leave the nest very shortly.—KATHARINE C. HARDING, May 30, 1927.

Minute Observations on the Manners of Birds.—Possibilities of studies of the *manners* of birds are opened up by bird-banding, and ought to draw from bird-banders more accounts of the little superficial ways that are so interesting and picturesque and help in gradually building up a better understanding of the psychology of birds. In the last number of the *Bulletin*, Mr. Forbush, after listing problems for attack, touched on the point that I am speaking of in his closing paragraph: "The individuality of birds, i. e. the difference in the temperament, habits, etc. of individuals". Mrs. Robinson gave an example in the same number in her vivid, picturesque account of the relations between nesting Chipping Sparrows and Tree Swallows. I like to keep creatures in confinement a few days to familiarize myself with their attitudes—if nothing else; and some feeding and banding stations afford opportunities scarcely less favorable for minute observations than captivity affords.

I would instance the case of a Hermit Thrush that I banded during the severe snow-storm of April 19, 1925. It might almost be assumed to have been grateful for care in captivity at that time. Its gentle beauty disinclined me to free it for some days, and it fulfilled my expectation of a winning personality in its perfect elegance. This Thrush did at first, it must be confessed, display alarm at the great bulk of a human being just on the other side of the wires, but it soon discovered that it could spend its time placidly in the midst of abundance, with none of the perils of the wild to startle it,—at least so I interpreted its adaptability. Then in place of thrashing wildly, it adopted an amusing systematic exercise,—a circuit of the cage done at speed, springing up from the floor to perch after perch in succession, over, across, down, and so on over and over again. The cage was almost three feet square. Every position of the bird was graceful, so that it was fascinating even in its quietest moments. A favorite pose was cocking up the tail like a Wren and holding the wings slack. It ate with avidity—nuts, corn-meal, house-flies, cheese, butter, grape-fruit, and strawberries. Its prevailing note was the pleasing, clear, uninflected whistle of deep tone, "tōōp"; variations of this note were a sharpened version like a Hyla's cry, and a sweet, scarcely audible "tyōōk". This "Tyōōk" might be said in turn to be akin to the less musical "chōōk" which this bird also gave. On two occasions when I was by, it indulged in singing, and never was a song more exquisite; this was as perfect as when ringing through the forest, but was given in a tone so soft that I strained my ears to listen, as if to a bird far off. The sixth morning the Hermit awakened me very early, with a louder, sharper version of its whistled call, through two closed doors, and it meant business, for it reiterated this note with a fierce insistence until freed. I imagine that another of the race had communicated with it from outside.—F. B. WHITE, Concord, New Hampshire.

Some Additional Bird Weights.—In this *Bulletin* for April 1926, pp. 33-36, the weights in grams of a considerable number of species were published, the number of individuals weighed being too inadequate, how-