

to assume that the Hermit Thrush had gone north during the summer; the Chippies may have been local breeders in part, and the others, with the possible exception of the Thrasher, doubtless were permanent residents.

Banding as at present carried on necessarily brings one into contact with a very limited number of species. Dr. Pearson and I, however, spent much of our time in observing those which we were unable to trap, and took a few short trips to nearby marshes to look for water-birds. In fact, we made a little list of the winter birds we saw during January, 1927, which, together with a little story written by Dr. Pearson was printed by the National Association of Audubon Societies under the title "Winter Birds of Summerville, South Carolina." Doubtless copies of this little leaflet are still available at the office of the Association.

As I finish this article, word comes from the Biological Survey that Brown Thrasher No. 424880, which was banded by me at Summerville on April 3, 1927, and which I took as a repeat on April 5, 6, 8, 10, and 14 was taken on November 14th at Clinton, North Carolina, at least one hundred and fifty miles in an air line northeasterly from Summerville. Since Thrashers winter at Summerville and were nesting there the latter part of March and the first part of April, and since this bird stayed in a restricted locality for at least twelve days, I had assumed it to be a resident bird. This return record, however, seems to indicate either that it was a migrant, or else that it took to a wandering life after domestic cares were over, the former view being the more probable. It would be most interesting to know the true story of this particular bird.

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## THE WHITE-THROATED SPARROW AT ST. ANSELM'S COLLEGE BIRD SANCTUARY

BY REV. EUGENE GOELLNER, O. S. B.

A VISIT at any season to St. Anselm's College Bird Sanctuary at Manchester, New Hampshire, would convince the uninitiated that birds appreciate and respond to human kindness. Furthermore, a visit would reveal the fact that bird attraction, conservation, protection, and in a certain sense, bird propagation are within the power of many, entailing no

loss of time, affording genuine pleasure, and creating an absorbing interest that waxes stronger as years pass by.

Throughout the winter, a season sometimes considered birdless, the feeding-station, supplied with suet, hayseed, grain, nuts, bread, doughnuts, is never deserted. A conservative estimate places at about two hundred and fifty the number of birds whose food-problem was partially solved during the winter season of 1925-26.

The continued existence of St. Anselm's Bird Sanctuary seems to be assured. The Sanctuary owes its establishment to the Reverend Father Damian Smith of the Order of St. Benedict. Father Damian, a lover of nature from childhood, left St. Anselm's in 1926 to join the teaching staff of another Benedictine school in Newark, New Jersey. His departure is keenly regretted. It is, however, hoped that he will soon be in a position again to show, in a practical way, his love for birds.

St. Anselm's College is located on a hilltop about two hundred and fifty feet above sea-level, a few miles west of the city of Manchester and the Merrimac River. To the north, northeast, south, and west, as far as the eye can see, are tree-covered hills, scattered farm-houses surrounded by orchards, and acres of cultivated land. Wildness seems to hold sway. The entire property of St. Anselm's is in reality a bird-refuge; trespassing, as far as possible, and hunting are strictly prohibited.

St. Anselm's has been identified with the bird-banding movement since 1922. Father Damian had the pleasure of retaking in 1923, four of the nineteen Song Sparrows banded the previous year. A congratulatory letter from Mr. E. H. Forbush, occasioned by the capture of the first of the four sparrows, is still on file. A busy schedule allowed Father Damian little time to carry on banding. With one trap in operation for a comparatively short period of time, he banded 78 birds in 1922, of which a number were fledglings. The operation of the trap during March and April of the following year resulted in the capture of an additional 113 birds. Four adults and some fledglings were added in 1924. The total number of birds banded during three years exceeded the two-hundred mark.

Banding was resumed on December 2, 1925. Since that day the number of banded birds has steadily increased, so that the twelve-hundred mark should be reached before the end of the present winter. Most of the banded birds are

adults. Of about sixty fledglings banded last summer, no more than eight failed to leave the nest successfully.

The White-throated Sparrow (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) constitutes about 25 per cent of the total number of birds banded. Three hundred and thirty-four have been trapped since 1922; two hundred and sixty-eight of these were taken in 1927.

The following table shows the number of White-throats captured yearly since 1922:

Spring, 1922	6	Spring, 1923	10
Spring, 1924	1	Spring, 1925	No trapping
Spring, 1926	50	Fall, 1926	None
Spring, 1927	117	Fall, 1927	151

The small number captured the first three years, it seems, was due not so much to the scarcity of this species as to limited trapping. It is, however, true that White-throats were unusually numerous in 1927.

During the migratory seasons White-throats are well known at the Sanctuary. If not always seen, they are at least heard. The volume of their high-pitched whistle often reveals the presence of a large number of birds. Twenty, thirty, or even forty birds disappear among the blackberries and small pines when any one approaches.

White-throats may be expected during the latter part of April. By the middle of May most of them leave this territory. A person experiences a real thrill, however, when he comes upon a White-throat in summer. There is reason to believe that one pair remained in this vicinity to nest in 1927. Not one was seen or heard for a period of five days. On May, the twentieth, however, Number 511306 (female), banded May 4th, was retaken. A few days later a male fed in front of the trap. On May 25th the female was again captured, and during the early part of June a singing male was heard on several occasions.

Observation leads to the conclusion that White-throats arrive in flocks, the exact size of which can frequently only be conjectured. The largest flock observed to date numbered at least one hundred and fifty individuals. The birds arrived while the observer tarried in the Sanctuary one beautiful May morning. The whole atmosphere seemed suddenly to throb with the song of the White-throat; upon the path, the trees, and the bushes the whole flock alighted. Fifteen minutes later the Sanctuary was deserted. No accurate account of the number of the flocks, however, can be given. There is reason to believe that at least six flocks arrived at the

Sanctuary last fall, because on six occasions repeats had become common, unbanded birds few, when suddenly repeats disappeared and unbanded birds became numerous.

An experience in May, 1926, also indicates the arrival of the White-throat in flocks. Previous to May 5th, fourteen of this species had been banded. When hopes for trapping more were fading, on the morning of May 5th a deserted blackberry thicket was again alive with White-throats. A new flock had arrived. By May 14th, 36 White-throats had been banded. That these birds belonged to the same flock may be inferred from the fact that many of them repeated frequently for about seven days and then disappeared simultaneously on May 12th. After May 14th White-throats were neither seen nor heard.

This species as a rule is not wary of traps. If a flock remains in the Sanctuary, within a few days most of them will be banded. Some re-enter traps daily during their stay. Number 112796, banded October 18, 1927, repeated seven times on October 21st.

The history of Number 578855 is worth mentioning. Trapped and banded on October 10, 1927, it repeated on Oct. 11th (2), 12th (2), 14th, 15th (3), 16th (6), 17th (2), 18th, 19th (2), 20th, 21st (2), 22nd and 23rd. The time of Number 578867's apparent arrival and departure is also interesting. Captured for the first time on October 11th, he was retaken the last time on November 14th. This bird, it seems, remained in the vicinity of the Sanctuary for 35 days before continuing his journey southward.

Most of the trapping is carried on in the Sanctuary proper, a few acres of attractive land, carefully guarded, on which trespassing is strictly prohibited. Four Government sparrow-traps and one house trap were constantly operated during the migratory seasons of 1927. These traps were sometimes only fifty feet apart.

White-throats show a preference for hominy, cream of wheat, and chick-feed.

Not a White-throat has ever been taken as a return. The fall of 1926 failed to yield one of the fifty banded the previous spring. One banded bird, however, was observed; it was one of a small number that visited the Sanctuary that fall. White-throats were very common during the fall of 1927. The first of 151 was banded on Oct. 1st, the last on November 2nd.

The files of the *Bulletin* show few or no records of this species retaken in migration. There are occasional records, however, of a bird wintering at banding-stations for more than

one season. Mrs. Harding's Return-3 (see this *Bulletin*, Vol. III, No. 1, p. 21)<sup>1</sup> emphasizes the tendency to return to a given wintering area even in New England for several years, a tendency which is quite marked in the South, where White-throats winter in abundance. (See Wharton's note in the *Bulletin* for October, 1927, p. 107). Of ninety-five banded in 1926, he had returns in 1927 of seven, or 7.368 percent. At Thomasville, Georgia, Baldwin had returns in 1917 of four birds out of six banded in 1916, or 66.66 percent (see *The Auk*, Vol. XXXIX, p. 216). In other words, the banding-records to which I have had access indicate that White-throats, however devious and uncertain their path to their wintering-grounds, tend rather strongly to pass the winter in the same locality. If we had the good fortune to possess a record of nesting birds for a series of years, I doubt not that this species would measure up to many others in returning to the same locality to pass the summer.

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## DOMESTIC VICISSITUDES OF BLUEBIRDS

BY HELEN J. ROBINSON

IN the spring of 1927 I established a chain of four Bluebird nesting-boxes. Box A was at my home station at Brewer, Maine; B was on a farm six miles east; C was on another farm a quarter of a mile beyond in the same direction; and D was on an abandoned place about an eighth of a mile south of C. I found a fifth nest, E, in a natural tree cavity on a farm three miles southeast of my station. All the nesting-boxes could be opened easily, and by means of a detachable pull-string shutter could be used as traps. Every box was taken by Bluebirds, and in two cases a second box was required for the second brood. The resulting five chapters of Bluebird history, some complete in every detail, some short and broken, are alike of interest. The following brief introductory outline gives a general survey of the nesting activities of the different families, and will aid in a clearer understanding of facts given later:—

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<sup>1</sup>This issue contains a note recording the return-4 of this bird, see p. 29.