

ON BIRD BANDING IN THE USSR

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In the USSR birds have been systematically banded since 1925. Through 1953, over half a million birds were banded, besides bats and other vertebrate animals.

At present, the entire banding activity is concentrated in the "Bureau of Banding," which belongs to the Department of Reservations, Refuges and Wildlife Management, in the Ministry of Agriculture. The banding itself is carried out by research workers (zoologists) of the reservations and refuges, institutes of universities and the Academy of Science, as well as by volunteer collaborators. In 1925 there were only two workers in banding, while in 1953 there were over a hundred. In 1925, 90 birds were banded, while in 1953 a total of 97,619. The main banding work is carried out by the reservations and refuges, national parks, etc. In 1953, 40,000 birds were banded in the Black Sea reservation, in the Astrakhan reservation over 10,000, about 5,000 in the Oka reservation, 3,000 in the Darwin reservation, 2,000 in the famous Bialoviezha, and 1,000 birds in the Crimean reservation. The vast majority of birds were banded since the year 1950.

It is of interest to show the participation of particular orders of birds in the banding, as follows:

<i>Colymbi</i>	61 birds
<i>Podicipedes</i>	1,236
<i>Tubinares</i>	36
<i>Steganopodes</i>	3,255
<i>Gressores</i>	10,401
<i>Anseres</i>	113,856
<i>Accipitres</i>	2,328
<i>Galli</i>	5,646
<i>Grues</i>	86
<i>Ralli</i>	1,602
<i>Laro-Limicolae</i>	203,020
<i>Alcae</i>	69,855
<i>Columbae</i>	321
<i>Cuculi</i>	45
<i>Striges</i>	356
<i>Caprimulgi</i>	62
<i>Macrochires</i>	564
<i>Meropes, Coraciae</i>	615
<i>Upupae</i>	419
<i>Pici</i>	2,170
<i>Passeres</i>	126,916

Apparently, the most work was done in the banding of waterfowl, while some orders or species have been neglected.

On an average 1.6 percent of banded birds are "returns" and a total of 1,219 birds banded in other countries have been found in the USSR. The returns show, indeed, some disproportions as to the orders. In geese the returns were 3.9 percent, in birds of prey 3 percent, in waders 2.8 percent, in divers 4.9 percent, owls 3.1 percent, while in gulls only 1.4 percent and game birds 0.6 percent. The passerine birds had a banding return of only 0.5 percent. On the other hand some species, e.g. the mallard, had 6.1 percent, the heron 4 per cent, returns. Where

intensive trapping of birds has been done, a high return percentage was obtained: in the Oka-Terras reserve up to 30 percent of the Pied Flycatchers have been retrapped; in Latvia, with the same birds, up to 55 percent.

Of some interest are data about the longevity of some species, obtained by banding. Some of them are: *Bucephala clangula* 17 years, *Anas platyrhynchos* 16 years, *Anas crecca* 20 years and *Plegadis falcinellus* 20 years.

There are now in use 12 types of bands (No. 1 to 12) of aluminum, three types: A, B, E are made alternatively in three colours. The text of the band is: in the first 8 types "Soobschi Bjuro Kolc. Moskwa," then the type (A, B, C, etc.) and number. In English the text of bands means about "Notify the Bureau of Banding, Moscow." Two smaller types hold only the text "Soobschi Moskwa," type and number, while the smallest two types hold only "Moskwa," type and number.

The banding in the Soviet Union now includes about 300 species of birds.

LITERATURE

RYABOV, B. F. 1957: The status and tasks of bird banding in the USSR. (Russian). Trudy II. Pribaltijskoy Ornitol. Konferen. [Proceedings of the 2nd Baltic Ornithological Conference.] Akademia Nauk, Moscow 1957, p. 412-421.

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RECENT LITERATURE

BANDING

(See also numbers 13, 14, 35, 53)

1. The Ringing Scheme, 1956. Robert Spencer. 1957. *Bird Study*, 4(4): 221-223. "An autumn passage of notable volume and variety, the impressive debut of mist nets, the institution of ringer's permits and an increase in the number of active ringers:—these were some of the features which helped to make 1956 a very successful and important season. The total number of birds ringed, nearly 145,000, was a big increase on the figure for 1955, and at 4,808 recoveries were up by over 15%."

"Mist nets, the thin nylon nets imported from Japan, made their first appearance in January and it is probable that about two hundred were in use by the end of the year. Their use was carefully considered by the Bird Ringing Committee and the Bird Observatories Committee, and experience with them left no doubt as to their value. It is clear, however, that their correct use necessitates training, and a measure of aptitude, on the part of the users, and the Bird Ringing Committee requires ringers not to allow nets out of their care until they are satisfied that the recipients have had enough experience."—O. L. Austin, Jr.

2. Report on Bird-Ringing for 1956. Robert Spencer. 1957. *British Birds*, 50(11): 449-485. "A record total of 144,734 birds was ringed in 1956, a fair breeding season and an exceptionally good early autumn passage no doubt being important contributory factors. For the first time the total of birds trapped in a year exceeded 100,000 and at 40,069 the number of nestlings ringed was also a record." The "Selected List of Recoveries" covers 26 pages. Maps are given showing recoveries of Teal (*Anas crecca*), Lapwings, (*Vanellus vanellus*) and Blackbird (*Turdus merula*). A Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*), banded in the nest June 13, 1939, was trapped in July 1956, 50 miles northwest of its place of hatching.—M. M. Nice.