

EBBA NEWS

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Pep-Up Your Correspondence

It has occurred to the Editor that often a member has an impulse to write to the author of a News-letter item or to someone mentioned therein, but as he knows not that member's address he don't obey the impulse. Therefore Editor suggests: (1) Look up your NEWS for May 1948; (2) June 1948; (3) December 1948. All three contain addresses which are even now probably correct for most of us. (4) Send your letter to Editor of NEWS who has the latest corrected list, the one by which the NEWS is distributed. He will forward your envelope. (All address changes should of course be sent to him immediately.)

It has also occurred to us (as being legitimate under the circumstances) that we suggest to members that we have found the book-lists on nature subjects sent out by 'Dover Publications, Inc.,' 1780 B'way, N. Y. City 19, to list periodically for sale at publishers' remainder prices an alluring and important lot of books on nature and science. Books perhaps many of us would like to own. Send in your name and say you'd like to receive their nature and science book-lists regularly.

Furthermore, it has been told us: 'Backyard Birds' is a book very recently out which should answer the sort of queries

we received a while ago from Mrs. Butler of Parkland, Pa. How to take care of infants which fall from nests or are deserted; how to fix up broken legs or wings; how to feed and care for young and old birds, etc. If a member who has had a lot of experience along these lines would send us in a hefty contribution, we'd be pleased to publish it!

"A chip off a wooden block" —as he calls it— comes from Dick Fischer.

"Occasionally we capture an adult of a species nesting nearby which we'd not usually capture: say, Phoebe, Tanager, Least Flycatcher, Vireos, etc. Next year we see the (supposed) same bird wearing a band, but we can't trap it. Well, moral is: freely use colored bands also on these birds."

To make prowling cats wary of the vicinity of banding traps, Stoner of California has found effective use of an air-gun with a very worn spring. It's BB shot only sting the prowlers and do not penetrate their hides. He says: "I have never killed a cat nor caused one a lingering death". (From lead-poisoning). Obviously if any Member takes up with such a suggestion, he must be very sure about the punishing quality of his air gun (or sling shot!). Part of the Editor's own system is to tether his cat on a long rope in a shady quiet place every early morning or at such times as he is absent from home. I have punished my own cat two or three times when I've caught him by or near the trapping area, and he remembers and learns —though the temp-

tation is naturally keen. I don't trust him unless I'm around the place somewhere —and he knows where. Ed. believes the high-sided and top-covered chicken-wire technique around and over your trap area is the only 100% protection. —What do you think?

Fischer also suggests that when one nails up bird houses on tree-trunks, he use finishing-nails (with the small heads) so that the growth-swelling of tree does not tear big-headed nails through the wood of the trap. (Good notion, that!) (We are scanning the mails for Dick's "Formula for making bird-houses." —Hurry, Richard!)

Please, please, do not always blame the Editor for the many minor slips in EBB-ANEWS! Members should realize that since the days of Ben Franklin writers and editors have been uninterruptedly shouting to printers and/or typesetters —"FOLLOW COPY, BROTHER!" Yet it is still standard practice that compositors do not always follow copy. . . . In our case we keep carbons of monthly ms. If the May issue bore no date line at all; the June-July issue no year designation; if divers letters are added to words or omitted from words, Ed. glances at his carbons and whispers thru his beard: "Follow, oh, follow copy, brother!" —For, with all his errors and failings, Ed. often is right. And all printers are known to possess a mysterious, unfathomable sense of humor —as well as big, kindly hearts.

Another big-hearted thing for this Editor to do is to suggest to members looking for a field-glass or a binocular (or who have a glass out of kilter and needing repair) to write Mirakel Repair Co., Mt. Vernon, 4, N. Y., about it. They have re-conditioned instruments and new ones too. "Satisfaction to purchaser, or money back," they say. A bander can get along without a good glass about as well as he could without a copy of Pough's 'Audubon Bird Guide' which we think tops for indentifications. And at this season correctly identifying juveniles, females, moulters and accidental species, challenges the best in us. (Ed. had a battle to decide between Audubon's Warbler and young Myrtle female last week. And Pough won the game!) And, by-the-way, we lay all three on the line when baffled: Pough, Peterson's Field Guide, and Chapman's Handbook. October thrushes will get a man down quicker than the running epizootic!...

Speaking of the economic value of owls: a bird man (L. W. Walker of N. Y. City) actually counted the two parent Barn Owls feed their three young 756 rodents. And, "sezze," that wouldn't include what the old ones consumed, nor those which the young ate the other 75% of the time when I was not watching." Nest found in a Connecticut barn.

Wonder if we all couldn't treat ourselves to—at least—one new banding trap this Fall! Member Gill not only has a lot of them to sell, (see back cover) but he can tell a fellow a lot about the uses of

various types—in case you're puzzled. And not only that but half of all the mazooma he takes in goes into the EBBA Treasury. Did you know that?—And he could have 'em painted dull black too, if you wanted. And, of course, recent experiment seem to prove that's best for summer trapping. Maybe for winter, too, who knows?

Fischer says he has banded some 518 House Wrens—and never heard a female sing. Yet Editor has two letters stating she does often, tho it's not the louder, male, kind.

It is quite likely that the greatest need our membership faces now is a list of thought-out Special Problems to be worked on scientifically thru Banding. Editor would like aid from veteran banders in compiling such a challenging list of projects. Indiscriminate banding is one thing; selective and concentrated banding on one or two projects is another and is more likely to prove fascinating in the long run.

At the B. S. Bowdish Station during July last 75 Catbirds were banded; that's 2½ per day! And 55 Blue Jays! Please let us tell our band of banders just how you do that, and with what!

"Adult male Indigo Bunting, banded May 13, 1949, near Louisville, Ky. was reported killed by train July 15, 1949, at Garrett, Indiana. This is approximately 220 miles north (slightly east). Record would indicate a fairly straight line of migration through central Kentucky to

summer home in northern Indiana. But, an adult R. E. Towhee, banded in Louisville March 1, 1947, was found dead at Batesville, Ind., June 12, 1949. Batesville is 85 miles N.E. of Louisville; a 45 degree angle."—H. B. Lovell.

Writes G. H. Parks of Hartford:

"Probably everybody knows that Bronzed Grackles will go almost anywhere for a shucked peanut. I have almost a battle to keep them out of the Chardonneret traps once they spy a peanut. Water draws them into my flat trap."—Is this an exaggeration about peanuts?—And/or Grackles?—Anyone give further testimony?

To go back for a moment to that Vol. 4, No. 2 issue of Bird Banding Notes: Ed. believes that banders should eschew both radio and movies to get time to study that document! Just arrived here recently. Full innovations, directives and dope. You just have to study and dissect it! And it has ideas for Specialized Banding.

Editor has again had occasion to color-band groups of Chickadees hereabout. But he has yet to master the proper technique for getting those tiny ones on the birds' leg. The smallest size one must cut short nearly ½ inch before unrolling. Then, to wrap remaining roll onto the leg, while holding bird in other hand; wrap it so that it won't unwind

partially, or be so loose the bird may worry it off; all this has always baffled him. Surely readers of EBBANEWS will welcome some advice!

Oakleigh Thorne II (Millbrook, N. Y.) reports a Tree Sparrow banded by Bristow in Cedars, Del. on 2/6/48 a supposed Wintering ground. But bird was trapped on 1/30/49 at Millbrook, N.Y. 200 miles north of Cedars. It repeated once, but Thorne, soon back at college, could not trap it a third time, after 2/2/49. —An apparent wide change of Winter ground.

P.P.S. —Back there when mentioning Identification Books, one, the second-best, was omitted. Ed. hurries to say that in his opinion the 'Manual For Identification of Birds of Minnesota (and neighboring States)' is nearly tops. It's always at his left elbow this time of year. Publisher: Uni. of Minn. Press. Minneapolis. (\$1.50).

Ex-Ed. Smith reports: "First Summer record of Blue-headed Vireo in this area" (Reynoldsville, Pa.) and "ditto on Turkey Vulture".

Have you got us a new EBBA member for 1950?

Right around the First of November is when you send your Two Dollars to Treas. Merrill Wood (see NEWS mast-head) to prove you are one of us for the next 12 months. If you lay this News down now and go and attend to it, why, then it'll be done —off your mind!

A bit from letter by Mrs. Lawrence of Rutherglen, Ont. —(She is a voter for 'Banders Should Specialize'). "Whatever my choice of special study, I find that in spite of efforts to make my recording as complete as possible, gaps of knowledge pursue me like hobgoblins. Every bird I have held I find I ought to have held a little longer to know better. For, gone, they are lost opportunities. Even if we are lucky enough to record the return of our bird, there may be changes of plumage or behavior for which comparative data is lacking. Bird-study is composed of missing links found at random and eventually fitted to the whole. . . . This past Winter I did some research work on weight of Black-capped Chickadees. This offered me several side-lines such as dominance, sex ratio, winter-movements. With a card-file of 56 birds, returns and all, carrying information on weight, fat, general condition, sex, moults, age, etc., I have reaped a rich reward; not only in the satisfaction of working with an objective, but in increased general knowledge of birds I thought I knew!"

Editor still wants more pieces on the general topic of BAITs. We already have a nice beginning —not quite

enough. What baits do you consider "unusual and unknown" and tested by your experience? What's your pet bait for your pet species?

Notes on 13 birds handled at Ardmore, Pa.: as summed by Pres. Groskin:

PURPLE FINCH, an adult rosy male at least twenty months old, banded

December 16, 1945, returned forty months later, March 12, 1949, and is at least five years old.

Three GOLDFINCHES banded in 1946, returned in 1949.

GOLDFINCH, banded March 10, 1946, returned March 17, 1949, at least 3½ years old.

GOLDFINCH, banded March 30, 1946, returned February 3, 1949, at least three years old.

GOLDFINCH, banded April 2, 1946, returned April 9, 1949, nearly four years old.

SLATE-COLORED JUNCO, banded October 27, 1945, returned February 1, 1949, over three years old.

SLATE-COLORED JUNCO, banded December 1, 1945, returned December 9, 1948, over three years old.

Four PURPLE FINCHES, banded in 1947, returned in 1949.

Groskin has sent us some other Returns data which we'll try to give you next issue.

Is any Member now indexing (or has indexed) the past four Volumes (years) of EBBANEWS? Indexing our publication appears to be a rather skilled task, and present Editor does not know what has been done in this respect, or by whom. He has had two requests for such indexing for purposes of publication in science periodical lists and volumes. It seems unneeded to state that this work should be done by one of us right away. We ought to have an elected Official Indexer to get the task under way and keep it up to date. For a small sum we can get it mimeo-ed perhaps, and provide all members with copies if they ask for them. —What say?

Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Ass'n Report for 1948-49 has just arrived here. If anyone in the Banding Business needs to know, it can be revealed that this reservation atop the Kittatinny (near Rte. 122, and between Albany and Drexelville, N. J.) is on what is probably the busiest migration-route for Raptors in U. S. A wonderful spot to visit just now. (Editor plans to go), Write to the Ass'n at 767 Lexington Ave., N.Y. City, for information on getting there —and on how YOU can add your own mite of financial support to the newly incorporated Association. They need a dollar or so from you and me to increase the efficiency of Raptor protection on this area!

We've got a Screech Owl, across in our 5-acre Pinery Plantation, who is singing off-and-on at odd times all day in sun and in shadow. —Wonder if she (or he) will raise another litter over there in the tree-box next Spring. —Not banded yet.

White Tails on Black Birds

If, as you look out your window one of these fine mornings, you chance to see black birds with white tails, where the day before there were only black birds with black tails, don't get the idea that you're seeing things, nor be troubled with the thought that Mother Nature has gone "Screwey." So runs a message to the readers of the "Bergen, (N.J.) Evening Record' recently.

It seems that Beecher Bowdish of Demarest, N. J. is conducting an experiment with Dr. Paul H. Fluck of Lamberville, away across the other side of the Garden State with Starlings. These birds, caught by "Beech" are transported by fast auto to Dr. Fluck's banding station where they undergo various intelligence tests. Following the tests the birds have their tails painted white and are set free.

The purpose of the experiment is to ascertain whether Starlings will return to a given locality. Bowdish is handling the publicity and hopes to hear from anyone who sees them in his neighborhood. It is the Editor's guess that these birds will speed to Washington to seek retribution and an audience for their sorry tails.

Mr. and Mrs. John L. Bull, Jr. banders of Far Rockaway, N. Y. have recently added six more traps to their equipment. They also have a converted parrot cage trap which is catching Grackles and Red-wings and Starlings by the handful.

Mr. Chas. L. Broley will give his famous illustrated lecture: 'Banding 1100 Bald Eagles' Nov. 11 at 8 p. m. in Ramsey (N. J.) Grade School Auditorium. (No. Central Ave. and Shuart Lane.)