

In the same locality, many Common Terns had scooped out concavities for their nests. One nest was found to contain what should be represented by one and one tenth eggs! One of the eggs was of normal coloration and size, measuring 1.75 by 1.25 inches. The other egg was without doubt an infertile dud; it was spherical in shape, with no suggestion of any pointing, and about one third of an inch in diameter. Its ground color was normal, and the brownish blotches were of the same color as the normal egg but somewhat smaller in size.

Is this the record for the smallest relative size for a 'dud' bird egg? ---3016 North Second St., Harrisburg, Penna.

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BIRD BANDING PROBLEMS IN INDIA

by C. Brooke Worth, M.D.

(Those American banders who think that English Sparrows or Pigeons make banding almost impossible should be thankful that they do not have to contend with the problems faced by Brooke Worth, former President of E.B.B.A. who is now with the Rockefeller Foundation, stationed in India.--AEC)

Not much bird banding has been done in India because of the difficulty in maintaining trapping stations. I have not even attempted to establish a bird feeder at my home in Bangalore because of the following problems.

If American bird banders think English Sparrows are a nuisance, they should see the crows in this country. There are two species: the larger Jungle Crow that is a solid glistening black; and the smaller House Crow, duller black with a grey mantle. Both crows are common in almost every city, usually existing in enormous numbers and boldly marauding everywhere. In some places you cannot sit in the garden for afternoon tea because the crows and kites dive down and snatch food from the table or even out of your hand. They enter kitchens to steal any exposed eatables that are left about. One day a crow ate the eggs in my pigeon coop.

The common Pariah Kite is also a ubiquitous marauder. Imagine, then, setting out food to attract smaller birds. The food, whatever

sort it may be, simply disappears. I have no doubt that if a small bird entered a trap to feed, a crow would follow it in and eat both the food and the bird. Ants would be another gigantic problem, provided bait remained in one place long enough.

The small birds likely to be trapped are mostly insectivorous, so that grain would not be a suitable attractant. One is therefore left with only a single choice, namely the water-drip mechanism. At our bird bath in front of the house I have had many visitors that came to drink and bathe. These include kites, both species of crows, and Common Mynahs. Other kinds have been most infrequent: the prize was an immature male Paradise Flycatcher that came only once.

During the long dry season, water becomes scarce in the surrounding country, and I have then seen occasional gatherings of bathing and drinking birds at small seepages or trickles of water. Sometimes the water was foul, but its motion seemed to entice the birds, just as in the case of water-drip traps. The sorts of birds in these parties have included various babblers, bulbuls, mynahs, and so forth.

Hence it appears that the future of bird banding in India will be centered on the development of moving-water baits. Possibly, large house-type traps will be advantageous, to give small birds a chance when crows invade the enclosure. A device that would exclude or deter crows, without rendering it impossible to trap other large birds, will also be necessary.

The day of bird banding in India is remote for more than the above reasons. As yet there are only a handful of amateur ornithologists in this country, since the many current problems of the population leave no time for the development of such refined hobbies as bird watching. This note is written merely to suggest the difficulties that might be encountered in any attempt to establish a banding program in India and, perhaps, in other eastern tropical countries.

--3 St. Marks Road, Bangalore, Mysore, India

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