

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

The response to the questionnaire enclosed in the August issue has been most gratifying, with slightly more than seventy-five out of some 245 members cooperating. Although preliminary tabulations have been made of various data, it is not yet too late to return the form if you wish to do so.

The majority of features of EBBA NEWS are approved, the only exceptions being some reservations concerning the value of listing changes of address and new members. An overwhelming majority of respondents favor omission of the full slate of officers from each issue, suggesting that such a list be printed immediately following the annual meeting. Likewise, the majority favor using one issue every two years to present names and addresses of all members.

The appearance of this issue was held up, in part, by attempts to solve satisfactorily the problem of presenting in each issue the plans for building different types of traps. Since the November issue will contain the Robin symposium, it is not possible to begin the trap design series until the December number, by which time we hope the technical difficulties will have been solved.

The Editor wishes to thank those members who have contributed data on colonial birds banded along the Atlantic coast this past summer as well as the members who have contributed data for the Robin symposium.

* * * *

WHAT OF THE RETURNS?

by Raymond J. Middleton

Since the systematic banding of wild birds began, we have read many articles concerning the returning of birds to their place of banding, and it seems that it would make an interesting study to determine how many individuals return to the same place in subsequent years. The following study is based on thirty years of banding at one location near Norristown, Pennsylvania.

No bird returning after March 1951 is included in this study, as none have had a chance to return a second time at the writing of this article in March 1952. It also should be kept in mind that many of the birds returning in the years immediately prior to 1951 may be expected to return again during the next few years, thus increasing the percentages of returns actually given below. Each bird included in the present study not only was present at this station the year it was banded but also was present during one or more subsequent years.

We have avoided using the records of species which are resident in southeastern Pennsylvania, with the exception of the following: Song Sparrows, which have both a summer resident population of considerable size, and which go south during the winter, and a winter visitant population which comes from farther north; Mourning Doves and Flickers, both of which are present in small numbers in winters, but our records for which show that the summer populations winter in states to the south of here.

Our study includes twenty-two species which are summer or winter residents, and no doubt there are many individuals of these species banded which are entirely migratory and from which it is improbable that any returns are obtained.

In studying the following tables, it should be kept in mind that the percentages given are based, in each case, on the number of birds which returned for the previous number of times. For example, under Winter Residents, it will be noted that of this group, there were 221 cases of birds which returned but once after initial banding and that 90 birds returned two times after initial banding; the figure of 40.7% below the figure 90 indicates that only about forty percent as many birds returned two times as returned one time after initial banding. Furthermore, the 'times returning' does not indicate the exact number of years after banding a bird actually returned; what it indicates is the number of years returning, regardless of when such returns occurred. For example, a bird listed as returning twice, may have returned in its second and third years of life or in its second and seventh years of life with no captures in between. In general, however, birds which have returned a large number of years have usually been present in consecutive years, a necessary event in view of the life spans of most species.

Table 1: Winter Returns

Species	Times Returning							
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>
Song Sparrow	9	4	2	1				
Tree Sparrow	78	39	16	10	6	2	1	
White-throated Sparrow	26	8	4	3	1			
Slate-colored Junco	107	39	6	4	1	1		
Purple Finch	1							

Table 2: Summer Returns

Species	Times Returning							
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>
Wood Thrush	31	14	6	1				
Robin	60	3	1	1	1	1	1	1
Catbird	94	24	11	6	4	1		
Purple Grackle	90	23	3	1	1			
Brown Thrasher	10	3	2					
Baltimore Oriole	3							
House Wren	40	14	5	3				
Crested Flycatcher	8	5	4	2	2	1	1	
Phoebe	1	1						

Table 2, continued

Species	Times Returning							
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>
Red-eyed Vireo	3	1						
N. Yellowthroat	19	3						
Ovenbird	2	1						
Mourning Dove	5	1						
Flicker	4	1						
Red-eyed Towhee	5	1						
Indigo Bunting	2	1						
Field Sparrow	7	1						
Song Sparrow	134	56	21	4				

Table 3: Summary of Returns

	Times Returning							
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>
Winter Residents	221	90	38	20	11	3	2	0
* Percentage		40.8	41.7	52.6	55.0	27.3	66.7	0.0
Summer Residents	518	153	53	18	8	3	2	1
* Percentage		30.0	35.3	34.0	44.0	37.5	66.7	50.0
Grand Total	739	243	91	38	19	6	4	1
* Percentage		32.9	37.3	41.7	50.0	31.6	66.7	25.0

*For explanation, see paragraph four, page 3.

131 N. Whitehall Road,
Norristown, Penna.