

following the course of the river valley, and even if it were so, it would have been in the wrong direction for spring.

Very little is known as to whether birds ever do overshoot the mark during migration and subsequently retrace their paths to a place through which they had recently passed nor is there anything to warrant the assumption that, failing to find a mate in one location, a bird must continue in a northerly rather than a southerly direction. Since the date of banding is considerably earlier than one finds mated pairs in this species in the present locality, it would seem that failure to find a mate would hardly be a factor in the present case. Indeed, one can not even be certain that this bird arrived with the migratory wave of Towhees which hits the Philadelphia area during the latter part of April; it may have wintered in the general region and may have been wandering aimlessly around for some unknown reason. In any case, it is an interesting case to speculate about.

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#### MORE ABOUT FEEDING BIRDS

The following letter from Mr. John V. Dennis, Box 376, Route 1, Leesburg, Virginia, concerns the request for information from Mr. Dennis which was published in a previous issue of EBBA NEWS. As readers may recall, Mr. Dennis is engaged in preparing a book on attracting birds. The letter follows:

"Many thanks for the good treatment you gave my recent request for information on baits in the last issue of EBBA NEWS. Your remark on the desirability of including material on the use of water, decoys, nesting material, and other non-food attractants is very well taken. Since writing you I had pretty much come to the conclusion that I shouldn't limit myself to food alone. I am sure that many banders would have perfected successful techniques which need publicizing. I would be very happy, therefore, if EBBA NEWS readers would send me not only information on food baits but also on any other attractants.

"I might mention that I have had a good many valuable suggestions sent to me on the use of live insects as bait. One bander expressed hope that an animated imitation fly could be perfected for use in

taking flycatchers. Soaking of water baits, it has been suggested to me that water traps are highly effective under wild cherry trees bearing ripe fruit. The cherries are said to make birds thirsty.

"I think one of the soundest pieces of advice I have received is to make use of the agricultural produce of your own region which is taken by birds. Foreign food items may not be recognized as food, or taken only after a period of conditioning. As an illustration, I might cite my experience with soy beans. It is well known among game managers that geese, many ducks, and bob-white quail readily take soy beans in regions where they are grown. It occurred to me that here was a food that had been overlooked by banders and feeding station operators. Last winter I obtained a supply of soy beans, soaked them in water so as to make them soft and palatable, and offered them at my feeding station at Leesburg. They went untouched. Soy beans are not grown to any extent here, and the birds were as uninterested in them as in pebbles. Next I tried them on Ring-billed Gulls at Daytona Beach, Florida. This proved an exception to the rule. The gulls took them on first offering, but not with any great enthusiasm. But at Lake Eola in Orlando, Ring-billed Gulls which are fed to satiation by residents and tourists, passed them up entirely; so did the Coots and various species of ducks on the lake. My final experiment was at a very successful feeding station in Gainesville, Florida. Soy beans which I placed on feeders in early March went untouched.

"I have yet to experiment with soy beans in a region where they are grown extensively. It would be interesting to find out if they might not be taken by field foraging birds--blackbirds, grackles, cowbirds, meadowlarks, etc.

"I would advise that soy beans be thoroughly soaked before being offered. They swell from three to five times normal size. Swelling of soy beans eaten by Canada Geese is a not infrequent source of fatality. More than balancing this drawback is the fact that soy beans are non-persihable, rich in protein, and 100% edible. The main drawback so far is getting birds to take them."

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