

CEDAR WAXWING RECOVERIES

by Arthur H Fast

The big run on the Cedar Waxwings occurred in the Spring of 1947. The story appeared in EBBA NEWS, Vol. 10, No. 12, December 1947. I have not banded one Cedar Waxwing before or since that run. The Fish and Wildlife Service has recently informed me that no bander ever has had a similar run in the East. It has happened a few times in the West, particularly in California. I have had no returns on those Waxwings.

(In as much as many present members of EBBA do not have access to the issue in question, the Editor has decided, in view of the uniqueness of the original banding, to reproduce here the original article by Mr. Fast referred to above.)

"This story begins as March 1947 came in somewhat lion-like. Temperatures were low and the ground was covered with several inches of snow. On these days a flock of about fifty Cedar Waxwings made frequent visits to the vicinity of the bird bath at our home at Arlington, Virginia. About two quarts of raisins were put out for them. After making many feints and false starts, the bravest of these birds came down for a tid-bit. Soon they all were eagerly feeding in relays at the newly-found banquet table.

"On March 8th, the first Cedar Waxwing was trapped and banded. A few days later, several of these sleek and well-groomed birds were on the tray feeding on raisins; they could be seen at very close range through our observation windows. When once established, they usually came shortly after daylight, returning frequently until about 1 p.m., then with decreasing frequency until the final feeding about 5 p.m., when they left for the day. After a time, the supply of raisins was gradually reduced and apples substituted. By late March, ten or twelve halves of apples would, in one day, be so completely consumed that the wind blew away the paper-like skin that remained. Raisins (and currants) were then used sparingly. The apples kept the birds in close view for longer periods of time than did the raisins or currants. We were able to share these birds with many of our friends. Considerable time was spent in picture taking by such bird photographers as Mr. Roger Tory

Peterson, Mr. Ralph E. Lawrence, and Dr. Myron A. Elliott.

"Not more than 150 Waxwings were observed at any one time. By means of the banding operations, we learned that these birds came in successive waves. A flock of twenty-five, fifty, or more of these birds would appear and swarm around and into the traps. These birds were so gregarious that by leaving one or two of them in the trap, others of their kind crowded around and soon filled our 12-celled Potter trap—sometimes two, or even three, birds being trapped in one cell. For the next several days, an increasing percentage of the birds trapped were repeats. The birds also decreased in numbers and were less eager to enter the trap. When this first happened, we had the impression that Waxwings were about to leave. However, in a few days or a week, another flock came; their behavior followed the same pattern. There were fewer birds in the final wave, which decreased until the last bird was seen on May 15. Our incomplete repeat records indicate that by far the greater percentage of repeats were the most recently banded birds which entered the trap with decreasing frequency. However, ten or twelve of the repeats persisted from near the beginning until near the end. During the last six weeks of the banding operations, the total number of repeats approximated the total number of new birds banded. No Bohemian Waxwings were trapped or observed, although at the time, reports persisted that these birds were seen in the general area.

"Our 12-cell trap was placed on the ground in full view from within the house. All of the Cedar Waxwings which we banded were taken from this one trap, excepting about fifteen which entered our one-cell EBBA trap. With very few exceptions, the traps were operated only prior to 8:15 a.m. on work days, and all day Saturday and Sundays. 120 Waxwings were banded on March 15 and 16; 75 on March 29 and 30; and 101 on April 17, 18, and 19. Between March 8 and May 13, WE BANDED A TOTAL OF 875 CEDAR WAXWINGS. ALL OTHER BANDERS in the United States and Canada reported to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service a grand total of 366 Cedar Waxwings banded for the year ending June 30, 1947. The second highest bander reported 206, the third highest, 44." By Mr. and Mrs. Arthur H. Fast, 4925 Rock Spring Road, Arlington 7, Va.

The following recoveries have been reported to me by the Fish and Wildlife Service:

<u>Band No.</u>	<u>Date Banded</u>	<u>Date Recovered</u>	<u>Place Recovered</u>
47-170865	3/16/1947	12/1/1947	Jackson, Mississippi
47-170682	3/9/1947	3/11/1949	Cameron, North Carolina
47-174704	3/29/1947	4/16/1947	Alexandria, Virginia (10 mi. from station)
47-174709	3/29/1947	1/20/1948	Rocky Mount, North Carolina
47-174985	4/19/1947	2/9/1949 * * * *	Hackberry, Louisiana

CONCERNING FOREHEAD INJURIES

The following is from Mrs Ernest E. Wanek, 5 Davidson Avenue, Ramsey, New Jersey, one of the newer banders, and concerns a topic which is of interest to all banders. Following Mrs. Wanek's letter, is a brief note from Paul E. Fluck, M.D., 73 N. Union St., Lambertville, N.J., who tells what to do with birds who do injure their 'noses':

"During our banding experience, we have discovered that a number of birds had injured foreheads and, at times, also injured chins, when removed from the traps. The cause seemed to be that, in their attempt to escape, they forced their mandibles through the hardware cloth, and since the openings were half inch squares, received flesh wounds when more than their bills protruded.

"We experimented with quarter inch hardware cloth which, in every instance so far has eliminated the flesh wounds, although at times the bill itself may at times be slightly scraped.

"Some of our traps had openings provided for the purpose of driving birds into gathering cages. This always seemed a difficult operation, so we constructed traps, one 27" x 24" and another 24" x 24", with openings for the removal of birds by hand. Practically any part of the trap can be made 'out of bounds' for a bird if darkened.