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CONCERNING GRACKLES

Mrs. Christella Butler, of Parkland, Bucks County, Penna., writes as follows concerning Purple Grackles:

"I have banded more Purple Grackles than any other bird. Last year I started taking notes on these birds with the following results. The young birds have no iridescent coloring, their eyes are dark and change gradually to the yellow of the adult birds. Also, the inside of their mouths are pink while those of the adults are black. They vary greatly in size and weight, although I have not used a scale. Some young birds are very heavy and some are very light. I believe the large ones are males, but I have no proof of this. (Who does?--Ed.)

"The grackles seldom repeat. In the spring I see many banded grackles feeding before I have banded any for the year but few of them enter the traps. They soon learn to remove the food without being caught. I band mostly young grackles. The adult birds raise the feathers on their heads when they are angry. They harbor bird flies (Hippoboscidae) which burrow down under the feathers and are hard to dislodge.

"One thing which I have noted is that I have more birds in my traps on a Sunday morning than any other day. This has held true over a period of years, and I wonder why. There is no change in my set-up in any way, yet the birds, especially the grackles, congregate at my traps on Sunday."

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MORE ABOUT BAND SIZES

On pages 6 and 7 of the May-June issue, Dr. Charles C. Blake made various suggestions concerning the use of bands of sizes other than those recommended or suggested in Bird Banding Notes. Under dates of October 17 and 24, 1953, C. Hapgood Parks sent the following comments concerning the size changes suggested by Dr. Blake: