

Exhibits

At the moment, there have been no plans for traps or other exhibits in the meeting room on Saturday, but the committee would be glad to have such exhibits. The Editor would suggest that members bring with them any traps or other devices which they have found to be especially useful, particularly if they are of original design.

Sunday Field Trips

In view of the number of members who went to the Patuxent Research Refuge three years ago, the committee felt that more benefit would be gained by going instead to Seth Low's banding station on his farm at Unity, Maryland, about 35 miles from Baltimore, and 25 miles from Patuxent Refuge. He will have various traps and nets in operation. The committee suggests that picnic lunch be eaten at Low's, each persons bringing his own; coffee will be served. Announcement will be made at one of the general sessions on Saturday as to how lunches can be procured.

After lunch, those who wish to, may continue on to Patuxent Refuge, where Mrs. Webster and others will have the Banding Office open for inspection. * * * *

WHAT A BEGINNING!

In the latter part of January, Treasurer Merrill Wood forwarded to the Editor a letter from Reverend Garrett S. Detwiler, 323 Fenwick Avenue, Salem, New Jersey, who had just joined EBBA, and the statement in the letter in that just five weeks as a new bander he had banded over 900 birds seemed almost as if it had to be in error. Inquiry directed to Mr. Detwiler produced the following interesting narrative:

"My experiences as a bird-bander, under Permit #7302, have occurred during a very brief period, for I set my first trap on 23 December 1953. It should also be added, for the encouragement of others living in a small city, that I have one of the worst possible areas for banding as my backyard is by fifty by fifty feet, and on this a one-car garage is also located. I have no shrubbery, and only one nondescript maple graces the area that passes for lawn. In addition,

there are three or four dogs running loose in this neighborhood. These same dogs must subsist entirely upon the bread scraps placed in my traps, if one can judge from the appearance of the mauled and mashed traps one finds in the mornings.

"Perhaps, like every new bird-bander, I commenced with great misgivings and only after much reading and re-reading of the literature that accompanied my first supply of bands. Only then did I venture forth to band my first bird.

"However, I set the first trap. It was one borrowed from Bennett K. Matlack of Bridgeton, New Jersey, and I sat back to await developments. The wait was of very short duration, for I was soon besieged by hungry birds eager and anxious to enter my trap.

"Three days later, I sent a hurried request for 500 #2 bands, for business had begun in earnest. Within three weeks, I requested an additional 1000 bands; now, this supply is half exhausted.

"At the end of January, 40 days from the time of setting my first trap, 1,028 birds wore my bands. There were 954 Starlings (including two retraps of Mr. Matlack's, 17 miles away, with 11 days elapsed time), 14 White-throated Sparrows, 29 Cowbirds, 17 Purple Grackles, 1 Blue Jay, 3 Cardinals, 6 Slate-colored Juncos, 1 Song Sparrow (it slipped through my cold fingers three times, and had to be retrapped, before I finally got a band on its leg), 2 Mockingbirds (year round residents here), and 1 Rusty Blackbird.

"It was never my intention to band birds indiscriminately with the attitude of banding 'more than you'. I banded only those which happened into my traps. Some days, with due respect to my hands and the hunger of the birds, I fed bread but did not set the traps.

"The traps which I found most efficient were a clover-leaf trap, made of one-inch mesh chicken wire; a rectangular trap, 24 x 36 inches, with a simple straight entrance, made of the same; and a 3 x 4 foot metal cloth drawstring trap of one-half-inch mesh. All I made by hand, but the birds were not partial nor did they disdain the crude appearance of the traps.

"Repeats have been relatively few, but those that did repeat were of greater interest than they were nuisances. One Starling returned to the same trap ever one and three-quarter hours throughout one whole day.

"The most interesting repeat was a Purple Grackle. After being caught and banded, he would re-enter the trap and fill up on bread and scratch feed. Upon seeing me approach, he would merely squat down in the trap and wait to be released.

"Near the close of that day, following his many returns to the trap, he figured out the clover-leaf maze. Thereafter, having got his fill, he would go to the center of the trap, look around in all directions, locate one of the three entrances, and nonchalantly saunter out.

"The next day he reappeared but would not enter the trap, for he had worked out another racket. He would alight near the trap, make a great fuss and commotion, and thereby attract a number of Starlings. They would enter the trap while he remained outside, from which place he would steal their bread as they rush back and forth with it in their bills in their attempt to get free. From that time on, he did not re-enter the trap again.

"Bird banding has proved to be a fascinating pastime and one by means of which I have learned more about these common birds than from more than forty years of interest and study of birds. I highly recommend it to all bird lovers."

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THE POWER OF SUGGESTION!

On February 13, Merrill Wood wrote, "Your EBBA NEWS notice on dues made six paid members send in their dues a second time!"

FRANK FRAZIER HONORED

That Fran Frazier, EBBA Secretary, is evidently a man of parts would appear from his recent election as President of the New Jersey Audubon Society. Hearty congratulations and best wishes!