

NOW IT'S BLUE JAYS INSTEAD OF STARLINGS!

Quite a number of the recent issues of EBBA News have contained articles and rejoinders pro and con the Starling. As a result of comments anent the Blue Jay in some of those articles, we have two communications concerning the Blue Jay.

The first of these comes from Beecher S. Bowdish, Demarest, New Jersey, probably the senior EBBA member in respect to age and length of membership and certainly one of the currently most active members, who writes:

"Several recent items in EBBA NEWS stimulate a thought or two in the bean of a patriarch bander.

"The note from Arthur O. Stone, Jr., (Sept-Oct, pp.3-4) as to the status of the Blue Jay, leaves a very much better taste than does his initial designation of the bird! In at least the last sixty-three of an eighty-three year period, I have just one 'witness after the fact' instance of a jay really molesting other birds, a young song bird killed (from a nest?), perhaps for young jay food.

"We've had as many as three pairs of jays nest in a season on our small property; we've seen no diminution of other birds as a result nor any molestation of other birds, other than the one instance mentioned. In one instance, jays and robins nested on opposite sides of a pine tree close to our house. Never was the jay seen to molest the robin in any way, but the latter couldn't return to her nest except via the jay nest, taking 'a rap' at the brooding jay enroute!

The foregoing is not to indicate that the writer in any way questions the experience of others, in other localities, with jays. It is suggested, however, that jay opponents exhibit equal restraint. Any who have shared our experience in rearing many young jays, brought to us as 'orphans' or 'strays', are bound to find it hard going to be too stern critics of jays.

"As to starlings, for a number of years those trapped at this station (no large number) were executed, not under any misapprehension as to the basic purpose of banding but on the theory that their local elimination would tend to protect both banding and other home property interests. This theory has been revised for some years, as a result of

watching starlings patrol and probe the lawn for Japanese beetle larvae and cling to tree trunks as they picked off female cankerworm moths, plus little indication of material increase in local starling abundance, and plus equally little indication of serious detriment to native birds which, latter, to this writer, would constitute really the only important economic consideration."

Also, there is an additional comment from Mr. Stone, who writes as follows:

"...in connection with Dr. John W. Aldrich's comments (Sep-Oct 1954, pp. 2-3) and with my stand on Blue Jays, let me state that I believe we all agree and understand the primary purpose in conducting a cooperative bird banding program.

"Although I dislike the Jay, all birds visiting my station are treated the same, and all leave unharmed, wearing a new leg bracelet regardless of what species they are. As a matter of fact, over ten percent of my banded birds are Jays.

"I was also glad to read in Dr. Aldrich's article that usually the undesirable birds are needed for information, as I spent some weeks recently in Florida trying unsuccessfully to capture and band shrikes but with no success."

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ALFRED F. SATTERTHWAIT DIES

Elizabeth Allen Satterthwait wrote Treasurer Merrill Wood recently that her husband, EBBA member Alfred F. Satterthwait "passed away 9/22/1954 after months of serious illness and severe suffering." She continues, "We have had to give up bird banding for many months, and I will not be able to carry on now. I believe we started banding in 1920. I was told that I was either one of the first three or first six (I forget now which) women banders in the United States. We both enjoyed the work very much and have many records that are interesting to us. We banded in Missouri, Illinois, and Florida." --24 West Street, Media, Penna.

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A CORRECTION

The address of Mrs. F. L. Bower should read, Lee's Hill Road, Route 1, Basking Ridge, New Jersey.

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