

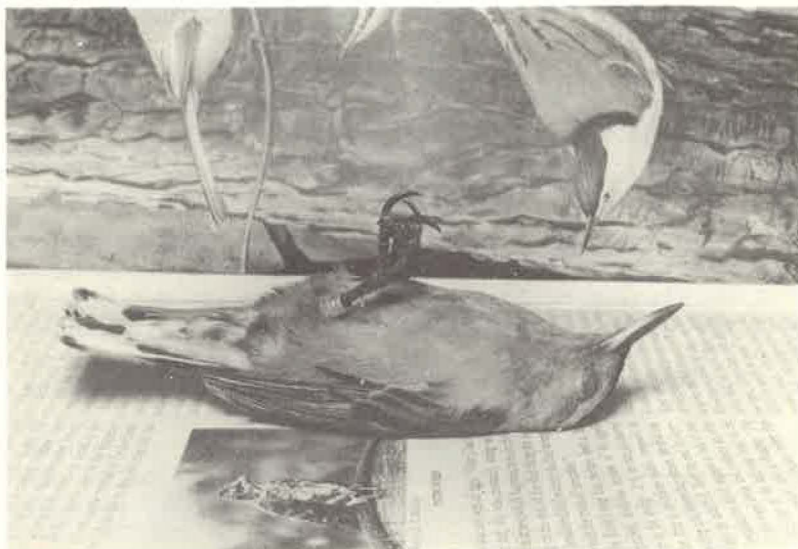
THE MOURNING DOVE BANDING PROJECT OF THE FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

The following announcement and request for cooperation from Mr. Harold S. Peters, Research Biologist, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, was received just two days too late for inclusion in the March-April issue. However, it is still not too late for EBBA members to be of assistance in this work in 1955. The announcement follows:

The most pressing need for improving Mourning Dove management is better information on the movement of doves from breeding areas of known population density to the various concentration points during migration and the winter months. Recoveries from doves banded as nestlings and breeding adults are needed to provide information on the source of origin of birds killed in each hunting area or state. To obtain the desired recoveries, it is necessary to secure assistance in banding a considerable number of nestlings and breeding adults throughout the range of the Mourning Dove. An analysis of recoveries from all previous dove banding provides only about 1,000 usable recoveries from nestling banding.

The recovery rate from nestling banding unfortunately is very low, usually only one to two per cent. However, several nestling banding projects have produced higher rates of recovery; consequently we hope more recoveries may result from intensified nestling banding projects. We need between 50,000 and 100,000 nestlings banded during the next five years. Adults banded from mid-May to mid-July can be considered breeding adults at the location of banding.

The recovery rate from adults may be slightly higher than that from nestlings; however, the difficulties of banding adults during the desired period may limit the number which can be banded. They must be trapped on the nest or baited to nearby traps. This requires very frequent visits to traps since adults cannot be away from eggs or young in the nest more than a very short time. On the other hand, banding of nestling doves is a specialized job, requiring diligent search for dove nests in various habitats. If eggs are found in the nest, a subsequent visit must be made to band the young. Usually we recommend the nestlings should be banded from approximately six to ten days of age. However, by utilizing a technique developed by Charles Kossack of Barrington, Illinois, and described in *Bird-Banding* (23:28-29, January 1952), very young nestlings can be safely banded. It is necessary to use a short piece of elastic adhesive tape, $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 inch wide, wrapped around the band and secured to the upper part of the leg, mainly on the small downy



WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH PLAYING 'POSSUM

This bird remained in this position for five minutes before flying away. --Photo by Joseph J. Malek

feathers. This prevents the band from slipping up above the joint of the leg or off the toes. The adhesive tape will gradually come loose and fall off in one to three weeks.

Dove nests are most commonly found from four to fifteen feet high in both coniferous and deciduous trees. In the early part of the nesting season, doves prefer evergreen trees almost exclusively. Cemeteries, parks, estates, hedge rows, farm-steads and small towns are good places to visit in searching for dove nests.

Banding should be so distributed and in such numbers that it will sample adequately the annual production and the breeding population to be evaluated. Nestlings should be banded throughout the entire nesting season in order to sample the production of all broods. The dove nests from March to September. Usually two or three broods are successful from four to six nesting attempts.

A very interesting and productive project can be undertaken by Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, 4-H Clubs, FFA or school classes by urging the girls and boys to search for dove nests during the week days. On Saturdays the sponsor should visit the nests with the youngsters and band the nestling doves. If eggs are present, the nest can be re-visited the following Saturday for banding. During the last five years, the state of Texas conducted a very successful banding project by utilizing school children and having local game protectors supervise and conduct the banding. Local bird clubs might well consider this type of project. This Service urges students, biologists, game protectors, sportsmen and others to participate in a nation-wide effort to band large numbers of nestling doves and breeding adults during the next five breeding seasons.

A banding permit must first be secured from the Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington 25, D. C., and the necessary Size 3-A bands will be furnished by this agency. Some states also require a state banding permit. If you are able to participate, please write me of your plans and at the close of the nesting season send a summary of your accomplishments. You will contribute much needed information to an important investigation of this migratory game bird and we believe you will enjoy the experience. --Peachtree-Seventh Building, Atlanta 5, Georgia

* * *

CONCERNING SIZES OF BANDS by Charles H. Blake

A question was asked at the 1955 Annual Meeting of EBBA relative to a new band size, between 2 and 3. This could not be answered off-hand. The present set of sizes comes rather close to being a logarithmic series, except sizes 8 and 9. Such a series is a logical way of determining the sizes. In the range from) to 7B, 1A and 1B are under size by 6%, and 6 is over size by 4%. All but one of the remaining 9 sizes are within 2%. The most reasonable way to get another size between 2 and 3 would be to reduce the internal diameter of size 2 by 7% to 3.7 mm and give the new size an i.d. of 4.2 mm. If this were done, the range 0 to 4 would all be correct within about 1%. The larger bands could well form a second series in which the present sizes 4, 5, 6, and 8 would still be correct, but 7A, 7B, and 9 would need changing. At present, I do not advocate a new band size but merely make these comments with the recommendation that any changes or additions be made concurrently with a reconsideration of all existing sizes. --Lincoln, Massachusetts

* * *