

## COMMENTS ON DISEASED BIRDS

Marie Dumont (Mrs. G. A. Dumont, Sr.) has the following to say about diseased birds:

"Of late there has come to my attention quite a few Red-wings that have a great deal of trouble with their legs and feet. Sometimes one, and sometimes both, legs are covered with a scaly disease, some to such an extent that they lose their nails and the scales seem to crack open. (Sounds like foot pox, doesn't it, PHF?-Ed.)

"Had such a bird brought in this past Friday afternoon, and the best I could think to do for it was to apply carbolic ointment. Later on, I was told that this condition was caused by mites, due to filth accumulating on the birds' legs. (Perhaps so in caged birds, but is this possible in wild ones?-Ed.)

"This information came from a canary and parakeet breeder, and he suggested the use of vaseline, so I wasn't far wrong in my previous decision. However, I am wondering if other banders find the same trouble prevalent among Red-wings, and, if so, what they do? While the birds muts be in misery, they seem to feed and fly well. Would just ordinary swampy areas which are unpolluted cause this to happen?

"I also had two Robins brought in recently that had developed what appears to be fluid under the skin covereing the lower part of the breast, abdomen, and sides. The first died; the second one I now have indoors, and it feeds -- the first was in worse shape than the latter. The party who brought this one thinks his cat might have got hold of the bird; however it has no broken bones or noticeable bruises of any kind."--311 Pompton Turnpike, Pequannock, New Jersey, letter dated June 11, 1955. \* \* \*

PSSST!!

From Dr. C. Brooke Worth, comes the following rebuttal to Mrs. Gstell's letter in EBBA NEWS, March-April 1955, pp. 42-43:

"Thanks for the letter you forwarded from Mrs. Gstell. It was a delightful note which all of us have enjoyed, including (I fear) our cat, for I immediately went out and put four robins to death by slow torture and gave them to pussy.

"The one thing Mrs. Gstell mentions -- that I have had no previous foreign recoveries -- is a point that had not occurred to me before; I thought it was just my luck. But, in former years when I had a more active station, I had plenty of returns and repeats among my own birds, so I do not find the lady's suggestion too disturbing. (Actually, the chances of one bander capturing another's birds are quite small, with or without cats; many large-scale banders have never trapped another bander's birds. A conspicuous exception, however, is in the case of gregarious species, banded in large numbers, notably Purple Finches and Evening Grosbeaks.--Ed.)

Since I obviously can't get rid of the cat without depriving myself of my family at the same time, do you think that she means I ought to give up bird-banding? If so, this means that the EBBA has cause to proclaim a retro-active impeachment of one of its presidents.

Mrs. Gstell implies that cats are my first love. Shocking! I think cats are fine, but I am much fonder of birds -- always have been. What I like best of all is that cats make birds so alert that it is real sport to observe and trap them. If it weren't for cats, we could all go around with salt shakers instead of helping Jess Gill by buying his wire contraptions." --516 Walnut Lane, Swarthmore, Penna.

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## WHAT NEXT?

"I am informed that Common Tern No. 553-20538 reached Icacos Bay, Trinidad, British West Indies, after being banded at Stone Harbor, N.J., in the Summer of 1954. The report from the F&W Service is somewhat cryptic in that it merely states that the 'How' of it was 'Found band removed'. Moreover, it indicates that the finder addressed a letter to F&W on April 18, 1955, one day before the 'How' was found and removed. Such foresight is indeed in line with the sort of extrasensory perception that has become so popular among your ilk. Does this suggest that bird-banding is on the threshold of becoming equivalent of bird-watching, i.e., one returns from a bird walk and says not, 'I saw a Black-throated Blue Warbler', but, 'I shut my eyes, and a Green Heron stalked past, weraing a band stamped X-34343?'

--C. Brooke Worth