

ELEANOR DATER SCORES A TRIUMPH!

As the following clipping from The New York Times indicates, EBBA Secretary Eleanor Dater really banded a rarity when she had the pleasure of banding an Atlantic Fulmar recently. As if this were not enough, she reports that she banded a Lark Sparrow on September 6, a rarity in New Jersey.

In connection with the dispute as to whether the bird should have been kept as a specimen, see page 12, below. However, let's not be too harsh with fellow EBBA member Charles Nichols who is alleged to have had designs on the life of this bird, because four years ago the same Mr. Nichols looked at the Golden-crowned Sparrow, a first state record without even a suggestion of coveting the bird for the American Museum collection.

It would be interesting to know whether this species has ever before been banded in this hemisphere in view of its extreme rarity in areas where there are banders and the absence of banders in its Arctic haunts.

Arctic Bird Pays a Rare Visit to New Jersey

(The New York Times, Jan. 10, 1956)

Fulmar Freed After 2-Day Stay Despite Museum Protests

An Atlantic fulmar, one of the most common birds in the world but a rarity here, was set free near Yonkers yesterday. Museum experts here were sorry to see it go, for they had hoped it would die so they could stuff it.

The bird, which looks something like a small seagull with a hooked beak, is gray with a white head and white breast and belly, and has a three-foot wingspread. There are millions of them in the Arctic and in such chilly lands as Baffin Island, Iceland, Greenland. They go to

Northern Scotland during their mating season, at which time they enjoy showing each other the pretty purpled insides of their beaks.

One Found in 1891

Fulmars, however, hardly ever get as far south as the United States. According to Charles K. Nichols, a research associate with the American Museum of Natural History, one was found near Ridgewood, N. J., worn out after a bad storm in December, 1891. It died and was stuffed and is still on exhibition in the museum.

A carcass was found in southern New Jersey in 1949. It, too, was stuffed and is on display at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia.

In 1930, and again in 1937, fulmars were sighted by reputable bird watchers in Long

Island. One also landed once in California, but that was back in the Pleistocene Age and all that was found was its fossil.

As this bird is not common hereabouts, Harry Breitenback of Ramsey, N. J., mistook it for a sick seagull when he saw it sitting beside the road between Ramsey and Mahwah Saturday afternoon. He stopped his car and put the bird which nipped him, in a box and took it to a local veterinarian, who thought it might be a midget seagull.

Conservationist Called In

Styles D. Thomas of Allendale, N. J., president of the Fyke Nature Association of Allendale and a prominent local conservationist and bird watcher, was called in for consultation. He identified it. The bird nipped Mr. Thomas. Mrs. Eleanor Dater, the official bird bander, also got

nipped when she banded it.

The word soon spread in local bird circles and numerous experts visited Mr. Thomas' home,

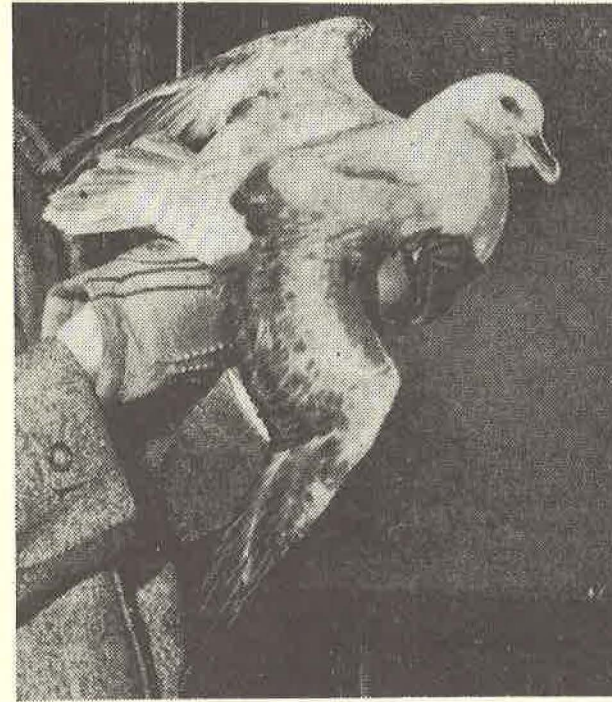
where the fulmar was being kept. They were sharply divided on whether the bird should be set free. One school of thought

was that this was a young and foolish bird, and possibly sick, and that its chances of survival were slim so far from home. The others, the conservationists, held that the bird's screaming, and biting indicated that it was quite lusty and that it should be freed after it had rested a bit.

Mr. Nichols, the man from the Museum of Natural History, explained rather sadly that "we did so hope that this one wouldn't survive, so we would get it." He said that another fulmar shipped down from where they are plentiful would not be the same thing at all. A bird that has flown down here under its own power would be a particularly valuable specimen.

In any case, the conservationists were the ones with the bird in hand, so after lunch yesterday Mr. Thomas drove to the New Jersey end of the Yonkers ferry line and, after receiving a parting nip, tossed the bird out to freedom. A group of seagulls spotted the fulmar and took off after it.

A fulmar is equipped with a fine weapon, a barrel-like tube along the top of its beak out of which it can squirt a jet of liquid wax. Yesterday the seagulls and the fulmar had a brief dog-fight, but the seagulls soon returned home as the stranger winged off to the northeast. Possibly they were outgunned.



The New York Times (by Edward Hausner)

The fulmar, common in the Arctic, resembles small sea gull

LONG-DISTANCE RECOVERY OF A CHICKADEE

by Maurice Broun

During the Winter of 1951-52 we were privileged to entertain 63 Black-capped Chickadees at our feeders. One of these, 20-99357, banded here on January 13, 1952, was "found dead", apparently killed by a cat, at Sebec Station, Piscataquis County, Maine, on November 25, 1952. The place of recovery, and probable origin of the bird, is approximately 475 air-miles northeast of Hawk Mountain, representing a considerable journey for a Chickadee.--Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, Route 2, Kempton, Pennsylvania

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