

BANDING AT A BOYS' CAMP

By Vernon C. Rossman

The 8th Psalm where David tells us that God who guides the fowl of the air and the fish of the sea, and where he emphasizes the importance of man in the holy pattern, was the scripture used at one of the morning devotions at our YMCA camp this past summer. It was an ideal background for putting across a point as we held in our hand a banded Hairy Woodpecker. The bird spread wide its wings and tattooed the back of our fingers with its sharp bill, much to the delight of the campers.

On numerous occasions this summer we had the opportunity to spread the banding gospel as we would take birds to the nature tent or to a group of boys as they waited for meals or other activities.

This was an unusually good summer for banding as we did our first netting. In 1956 we banded 1 bird at the same location, this year 165. Two nets were in daily operation and our biggest thrill occurred when 3 male Scarlet Tanagers, 2 Black and White Warblers, and a Downy Woodpecker decided to be netted at the same time. What a time we had!

We discovered that catbirds, chickadees, woodpeckers and towhees enjoy having the bander spend a great deal of time (snip snip) untangling them. We learned also that thrushes, flycatchers and warblers were released rapidly.

Among the more interesting catches of the summer were Crested Flycatcher (1), Least Flycatcher (7), Canada Warbler (5), Magnolia Warbler (1), Hairy Woodpecker (3), Veery (14), Baltimore Oriole (2), Brown Creeper (1 local), and Scarlet Tanager (8). While Cedar Waxwings were numerous not one was enticed.

Hoping to make some early morning catches, one net was left up over night. Never again -- a deer leaped through the top sections. After hours of painstaking threading the net was again ready and performed admirably the rest of the summer.

Incidentally, while 160 boys enjoyed the results of our banding operation, not one ever saw a net. They were set at the edge of a swamp off the beaten path. ★ ★ ★

WHOSE ALBINO COWBIRD?

Writes John Dennis, 17 Liberty St., Nantucket, Mass., "We have had a partial albino cowbird present all fall and wearing a foreign band on its right leg. It has eluded all efforts to capture it. The bird has a brown head, black wings and black tail. The rest is sort of a dirty white with black streaks showing through here and there. We would like very much to hear from whoever banded a bird of this description." ★ ★ ★