

BANDING IN WESTERN ONTARIO

By Leslie A. Gray

I have not been banding very long and hence do not have any recoveries as yet. I was granted a permit in mid-June, 1957, and began banding early in July after I had acquired nets and bands. My total for the year will not be very large as a result, since I have spent considerable time developing trapping techniques. I have banded about 700 birds so far.

However, a good proportion of them are shorebirds. To date, I have banded 14 species of shorebirds, about 200 individuals. Lesser Yellowlegs, Dowitchers, Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers, Pectoral and Spotted Sandpipers, make up the bulk of this group, but there are some interesting items including a Western Sandpiper and a Wilson's Phalarope on the list as well.

My system consists of wading out into the mud flats of the Dundas Marsh (a very famous locality in Western Ontario) and planting mist nets. The nets must be watched very closely since flocks of "peep" sometimes hit and weigh down the mesh so that some of the birds are partially submerged.

I have had Wood Ducks and Blue-winged Teal strike the nets but they invariably escaped before I could get to them.

The Wilson's Phalarope was the lousiest bird I have handled to date. The poor bird was swarming with lice, yet seemed healthy. The House Wrens I have banded here have been very docile, spiritless birds, yet I understand that generally they are little monsters in the nets.

While extensive banding of game birds has been carried on by the Canadian Government for many years, there has been little interest here in the banding of non-game species by private individuals until quite recently. As late as May, 1954, the only banding done by Canadians at Point Pelee was with the use of one heligoland trap located on the Point.

Sometime in 1953, a pair of mist nets was acquired from Seth Low and tried out at St. Thomas, Ontario, for the first time. In the spring of 1955, four mist nets were used by Dr. Gunn and Mr. Wasserfall at Point Pelee and they trapped 2,800 birds in that period.

Since then, mist nets have really caught on with Canadian banders and are now in wide spread use. This spring, for the first time, extensive banding operations were carried out on Pelee Island itself. The number of active banders has increased considerably in Ontario since the advent of mist nets.

You can gather from this, then, how difficult it is to obtain much data from other Canadian banders. Those with whom I correspond, since they have been banding only a short while, can count their recoveries to date on the fingers of both hands. Hence, the lack of accurate, up-to-date banding information available here.

I should be very glad to hear from other members of EBBA and am looking forward eagerly to receiving my first copy of EBBA NEWS. Incidentally, if any back copies are available, I should

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Respectfully,

Elise Dickerson
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