

NEWS FROM SOME NORTH JERSEY BANDERS
By Elinor McEntee, Regional Reporter

John McDermott of Paramus and Art Barber, Rochelle Park, who do most of their netting and trapping away from their home stations, recently spent two days in Cape May without too much success, although they did capture a Sharp-shinned Hawk in a net along with a thrush. Unfortunately the thrush was the loser (of his head) and John still wonders if the hawk attacked the thrush after both were in the net, or did it attack first becoming enmeshed in the process.....Noticing flocks of birds from a train window near East Rutherford, Art and John, upon investigation on October 1st, found a small flock of Bobolinks and large numbers of Savannah Sparrows. Setting their nets next day they totalled nearly 70 Savannahs, and a couple of days later Art brought the total up to 110. The Bobolinks unfortunately had left the area.....John reports an interesting recovery of a Sanderling, banded by him in 1958 at Tuckerton, and re-trapped on the west coast of Mexico this fall by a professor from the Univeristy of Tucson who was banding in Mexico.....A hint for netters with the problem of setting poles in hard ground -- carry along a brace and bit and drill your way down.

Eleanor Dater reports that she recently caught a Screech Owl in one of her nets. Not only is she busy netting, but she also has to keep one step ahead of all her four footed nocturnal visitors - opossums, foxes, skunks, and raccoons -- by wheedling from the local supermarkets old berry pies, doughnuts, and yes, believe it or not, cream pies, which she puts out each evening. She reports the pies, after a few schlurp, schlurps, fast disappear. Bananas by the dozens go equally fast when the raccoons appear.

Marie Dumont of Pequannock felt that September was very poor for banding. That opinion seems to prevail at most stations. She regrets the decrease in her station area of many of our more common birds such as Song Sparrows, Catbirds, Thrashers, etc. Several species which regularly nested in her yard such as the Chat, Crested Flycatcher, etc. have disappeared entirely. This is the price we banders pay for living in this rapidly expanding metropolitan area.

Interestingly enough, at my own station, while the totals of a few species -- notably Tree Sparrows and Redwings -- have greatly decreased, the total number of species seen and banded has increased as my neighborhood has gradually become entirely built up in the past decade. Possibly this can be explained by the planting and growth of many street trees and generous landscaping with shrubs and trees on most individual properties, which once were just fields and lightly wooded areas attractive only to certain species. There's always a silver lining!.....★ ★ ★