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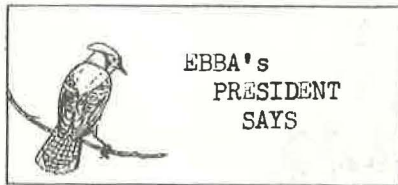
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EBBA's
PRESIDENT
SAYS

A recent rainy evening sent me on a rummaging spree through old papers. I was actually looking for a catalog of wildflowers, when I found a reprint of a paper "Birdbanding by Systematic Trapping" by S. Prentiss Baldwin.

The paper was given at an annual American Ornithologists Union meeting at the American Museum of Natural History in New York on November 11, 1919. The data recorded in that paper and the traps used by Mr. Baldwin are most impressive.

Mr. Baldwin started banding in 1914 using a government sparrow trap. The introduction to the reprint (1931) states "the presentation of this paper at that November meeting in 1919 was, in the early part of 1920, followed by the adoption of the birdbanding method by the United States Biological Survey, and this text was used by the Biological Survey as its first instruction book on this subject."

A card filing system was recommended for bookkeeping in addition to a daily record card. Finely cracked grain and bread crumbs were suggested bait. "Always use the smallest size of band that will fit around the leg of the bird, fitting it snugly so there is no room for twigs and thorns to slip through and catch the band." This rule holds good today with the admonition "fitting it snugly and so shaped as to slide easily up and down the leg without binding."

In one month, February 26 to March 28, 1915, at Thomasville, Georgia, Mr. Baldwin banded 90 birds. In 1916, same place and season, 213 birds. Returns at Thomasville in 1916 include 4 Brown Thrashers, 2 Blue Jays, 1 Cardinal, 1 Carolina Wren, 2 White-throated Sparrows, 1 Myrtle Warbler and 2 Chipping Sparrows.

In 1917 he had 31 returns which included 4 Myrtle Warblers, 1 Yellow Palm Warbler and 5 White-throated Sparrows.

Baldwin also banded near Cleveland, Ohio, from June to November. In 1914, his first year, he banded 117 birds. In 1915, 327; In 1916, 280; in 1917, 167, and in 1918, 153 birds.

Numbers on bands recorded in Baldwin's paper all contained five digits with no prefix. Apparently there was no system of numbering by which a band size could be determined.

With records like these obtained with simple wire traps, one wonders what the good old days would have produced with mist nets.

A note in the introduction of the reprint states that for the year ending June 30, 1930, there were 1750 bird banders and they had placed 182,263 bands during the year. The return records of birds banded numbered about 10,000 for that year.

The American Bird Banding Association was the only organization of its kind in the early 1900's and was the parent of the present four U.S. associations.

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My best wishes to all EBBA members for a very merry Christmas and a New Year full of significant and exciting banding records.

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A CALL FOR P A P E R S Anyone wishing to take part in the program of the Annual Meeting, April 22-23, 1961, should send (1) the title of the paper, (2) number of minutes required, (3) kind of projector or other equipment required, and (4) any preference for a place on the morning or afternoon session, to Merrill Wood, 811 North Allen Street, State College, Pennsylvania. If you never have been on an Annual Meeting program, this is the time to start!

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THE COVER PICTURE
Photo by Eleanor Dater

The Saw-whet Owl whose picture appears on the front cover was captured by EBBA President Eleanor Dater on the first morning round of her nets on November 15th, 1960.

Before being released, the banded bird visited four classes of 5th and 6th grade students in the Ramsey, N.J. schools.

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