

NOTES ON PURPLE FINCHES BANDED AT WESTPORT POINT, MASS.

By Malcolm Oakes

My experience in banding Purple Finches at Westport Point, Mass., during the summer of 1961 (May through September) indicates a marked scarcity of birds compared to the three previous years.

1958: 42 banded in 5 days of banding (September only)
 1959: 190 " " 17 days of banding (April through September)
 1960: 178 " " 45 days of banding (June through September)
 1961: 110 " " 87 days of banding (May through September)

However, 1961 returns were substantial: 58 returns, or 33% of the number of birds banded in 1960. These 1961 returns can be further broken down as follows:

Birds originally banded in 1958: 1
 Birds originally banded in 1959: 20
 Birds originally banded in 1960: 36
 Birds originally banded in 1961: 1

The return from 1958 was banded on September 14, 1958 as an adult male, and returned June 16, 1960 and June 1, 1961. 16 birds banded in 1959 returned both in 1960 and 1961; and four birds banded in 1959 returned in 1961 but not in 1960.

Repeats: 73 birds banded or returned in 1961 repeated in 1961, as compared to 126 birds that repeated in 1960. Of the 73 birds which repeated in 1961:

| | |
|----|---------------------|
| 41 | birds repeated once |
| 20 | twice |
| 8 | 3 times |
| 5 | 4 times |
| 1 | 5 times |
| 1 | 6 times |
| 2 | 7 times |
| 1 | 8 times |

Nine birds banded in 1959 (sex unknown from color) showed no sign of color when re-trapped in 1960 but were in full male plumage when re-trapped in 1961. This indicates full male plumage is probably acquired in the second year after birth. Ten birds banded in 1960 (sex unknown from color) were in full male plumage in 1961 but these presumably were one year old when banded in 1960.

If full male plumage is generally acquired in the second year after birth, then of the male birds which returned in 1961, 11 birds were at least 3 years old, five were at least 4 years old, and one was at least

5 years old. (See note elsewhere in this issue on old Purple Finch. -Ed.)

Westport Point, Massachusetts

BANDING A PARASITIC JAEGER

By Mabel Gillespie

On September 8, 1961, while I was at my summer home on Martha's Vineyard Island (south of Cape Cod), Ethel Roberts of Edgartown phoned to ask me to band an immature Parasitic Jaeger (*Stercorarius parasiticus*). Mrs. Roberts has raised exotic birds and is adept at caring for injured or sick wild birds. The Jaeger had been found on one of the island beaches unable to fly, and was brought to her.

Accompanied by Grace Meleney and others, I drove the six miles to Mrs. Roberts' home. The Jaeger was obviously a bird of the year, and the diagnostic tail feathers were little developed. The measurements and plumage corresponded to the description in Forbush: Birds of Massachusetts and Other New England States, Vol. 1.

At the time of banding the bird could not stand up, but kept falling forward. After being cared for, fed and bathed for several days, the Jaeger was considerably improved. When Mrs. Roberts thought it might be able to fend for itself, she took it to the calm water of a bay and put it in the water. When the bird showed signs of being about to drown, it was rescued and cared for several days longer. Then it was taken to an isolated beach and left near the water. When Mrs. Roberts looked for it a few hours later it had disappeared.

Mrs. Roberts was convinced from close observation of the Jaeger and in comparison with characteristics of birds she had raised that this was a bird little more than out of the nest. However, Jaegers nest in Arctic and Subarctic regions, and dates of eggs range from mid-May to late June. (Bent: Life Histories - Gulls and Terns) The incubation period is 24 days (Forbush) and therefore birds of the year would be on the wing by August at the latest. Forbush says: "Its principal flight along the Massachusetts coast occurs on its southward migration ... the majority come in late August or September".

Jaegers are oceanic birds, though they may sometimes be seen from shore as they harry terns. Bent speaks of seeing ten Parasitic Jaegers on the beach at Ipswich, Massachusetts. A young bird on its first migratory flight might seek land if ill or exhausted. There had not been any recent stormy weather, but there was an excessive heat wave at the time. Could this have had any ill effect on the Jaeger?

Whatever the explanation, this was a new "life bird" for my banding list.