

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW STUDY

By Ralph K. Bell

I am doing some research on the breeding range, migration and winter distribution of the White-crowned Sparrow east of the Mississippi. If possible, I would like to determine the average age; average distance between stops during migration, and whether adults make longer flights between stops than immatures.

Very few White-crowned Sparrows are evidently banded on the east coast as only 24 were banded at Island Beach during October 1961. However, Dennis did band 503 at Nantucket Island during the fall of 1958. It is interesting to note that Bartel did not band a single White-crown that fall at Blue Island, Illinois. Preliminary investigation indicates main migration west of the Alleghenys in a southwest direction.

Formerly its main wintering grounds were apparently Kentucky and Tennessee. It is evidently increasing in numbers over many mid-eastern states (it was even recorded at St. Petersburg, Florida, during the winter of 1959-60). Part of this could be the result of better survey methods, but I feel it is increasing in numbers. My father took (and kept) Bird-Lore from 1911 to 1915 and the only mention of White-crowns on the Christmas Bird Counts were 10 individuals recorded on the 1914 count at Knoxville, Tennessee. My brother and I subscribed to Bird-Lore from 1928 to 1934 and I note that White-crowns were often mentioned on many Kentucky-Tennessee counts. The 1932 count added one from Lexington, Virginia, and stated that it was not known to winter before (contrast this with 25 on the 1954 count).

My recoveries have been few so far (only one from 420 banded from 1954 through 1962). It was banded on May 6, 1962 and on June 12, 1962 it flew into a living room at Indian Cove, Battle Harbor, Labrador (thanks to information kindly supplied by Mr. Duvall). This is a distance of approximately 1500 miles, or an average of more than 40 miles per day. I have caught two White-crowns banded by others. One was banded by Mrs. Eloise McGregor, Ellenburg Depot, N.Y. on May 10, 1959 and retrapped here on October 16, 1959. The other foreign retrap was banded by Mr. Cyril Wolfling, Alden, N.Y. on October 10, 1959 and retrapped here on October 1, 1960 (my first White-crown of the fall season).

The idea for this study on White-crowns began in the fall of 1960 when I read a short article in the Redstart (Brooks Bird Club publication) by Mr. M. B. Skaggs, a long-time bander from Willoughby, Ohio. He had banded a total of 530 White-crowns during fall migration covering 14 different years. He had raised the question as to the possibility of the average life of the White-crown being 25 months, since 47% of his fall captures were immatures. My curiosity being aroused, I checked my fall bandings and found the immatures to total 56%, indicating a slightly less than a 2 year life span.

Sampling from other areas are bringing in varied results and that is why I would appreciate hearing from all banders that catch White-crowns. Information needed is as follows: first and last spring migration dates and totals; first and last fall migration dates (of migrants that do not winter) and totals. The adults and immatures should be separated in the fall. Peak migration dates, numbers of wintering individuals (if any) and any other information will be quite welcome.

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ERRATA

EBBA NEWS Vol. 26(1):12 -- Jane Church points out that Dr. Murray and Dr. Wetmore did not photograph her Sage Thrasher. Paragraph 2 should read: "It was confirmed in the hand by Dr. F. G. Sheider of Washington, D.C. and photographically by. . .".

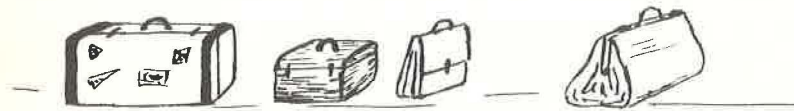
EBBA NEWS Vol. 26(1):14 -- Gladys Cole writes that the name of Jim Meade was omitted in error from her report of assistants at Operation Recovery Ocean City, Md. - 1962.

LONGEVITY OF A CARDINAL
By William H. Jenkins, Jr.

On January 1, 1963 I trapped a male Cardinal bearing band no. 50-184003. Upon checking my records, I found that I had banded this bird on April 26, 1952. It had not previously repeated nor returned until 1963.

I wonder whether this comes near to being a record age for a Cardinal in the wild?

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Be sure to get your bags packed and ready for your trip to the meeting!