

HOW MANY SEAGULLS?

Reviewed by William Pepper

This is the 1962 report from the research director of the Massachusetts Audubon Society on their Herring Gull marking project.

Having banded and color marked a total of 2855 as against 1945 in 1961 by more effective catching methods and selecting the most productive areas, they also developed better reporting and checking methods, resulting in the remarkable total of 9300 public and staff reports, as against about 900 in 1961.

From these reports it seems evident that the Herring Gulls concentrate at abundant food sites, according to the report, in the following order of choice: dumps, fish piers, along beaches, at sewer outlets and at pig farms. Almost the entire number of reports were of a local nature, only two bona fide reports were received south of Delaware Bay.

The proposition is advanced that man's filth is responsible for the increase of Herring Gulls and that it attracts them to places where they may become a hazard. This is verified by comparing Christmas census figures at various similar locations.

It closes with a defense of the Audubon Society's having a hand in control work against the Herring Gull, despite their statement that the Herring Gull is one of their favorite birds. They believe that if things progress unimpeded the Herring Gull will be subjected to quick, short-sighted control methods, and the real causes will not be dealt with.

It is suggested that the cleanup, which is the long range solution to this problem, needs understanding help from the public.

As a last word they appeal for reports, from anywhere, of Herring Gulls with colored bands and suggest you try reading the band number -- a telescope or glasses might help. I might add -- don't walk off the fish pier trying to read the other side of the band!

14-YEAR-OLD OSPREY
G. Hapgood Parks
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The following record falls far short of this species' longevity limit, but any wild bird that has worn a band for almost 14 years is worthy of mention. Recently, a note from the Bird-Banding Laboratory informed us that Osprey 39-822575 had been "found" floating in a private pond" at Webster, Mass. by Peter A. Strzelewicz, on April 7, 1963. We had placed this band on this Osprey, as a nestling, on July 8, 1949. The nest was located at the summit of a precipitous cliff on Jordan's Delight Island, Maine (4427 - 06749). This bird's nest-mate has never been heard from.