

GULL BAND INSIDE 'GOOSEFISH'

Grace Coit Meloney, of White Plains, N.Y. has had an extraordinary recovery report from the banding office. Accompanying the report was a copy of Acting Chief Earl Baysinger's letter to the finder of the band, Mr. Erford W. Burt, Burt's Boatyard, Inc., Vineyard Haven, Massachusetts. At Grace Meloney's suggestion, this most interesting letter follows:

Dear Mr. Burt:

"I am writing in reply to your letter dated November 19, 1965. In this letter you reported a band (676-16318) which you noted was on a gull which you found inside a 'goosefish'.

"Our records indicate this band was placed on a nestling herring gull on July 21, 1963. The gull was banded at Cape Poge, Edgartown, Mass. by Miss Grace Meloney.

"To the best of my knowledge, this is the first recovery we have received of a full-grown gull having been eaten by a 'goosefish'.

"Recoveries of this sort are unusual but not unknown. For example, during recent months, one of the fellows working here in the Banding Laboratory had one of his terns turn up in the stomach of a shark off the coast of Florida.

"We have also recently received a recovery of a mourning dove which was found inside a two-pound bullhead catfish in California.

"Although there are many species of birds which eat fish, apparently there are a few species of fish which attempt to even the score.

"To put the shoe on the other foot, we recently received a letter from another person who had picked up a banded gull. In this instance, instead of the gull being eaten by a fish, this gull had caught a blowfish which promptly inflated in the gull's throat and the gull could neither swallow nor disgorge it and subsequently choked to death. This is a sort of classic example of "biting off more than you can chew."

"I appreciate your interest and cooperation in reporting this band to us. I will process your letter through our routine channels and you will receive an IBM card in the future noting the banding information I have provided you in this letter."