

AN "ANCIENT" HERRING GULL
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I have only the vaguest recollection of Duck Rock, an islet offshore from Monhegan Island, Maine, where with three companions I went ashore for an hour on June 29, 1930, to band Herring Gulls. The truth is I had entirely forgotten about Duck Rock until I received notice from the Bird Banding Office of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service that one of the 19 Herring Gulls, which I banded that day as a 10-day old chick, was found dead, June 20, 1966, on the shore of Lake Michigan's Little Traverse Bay near Petoskey in northern Lower Michigan.

The fact that this bird had moved far inland from its coastal birthplace is noteworthy, and had died within a few miles of the University of Michigan Biological Station where I was teaching is a curious coincidence, but hardly extraordinary. What is extraordinary about the report is that the Herring Gull had lived 36 years!

It was a troop of Girl Scouts who chanced upon the bird just recently dead. On noticing its copper band with the number and "Notify Biological Survey, Washington, D.C." clearly legible, they cut it off and the troop leader mailed the number as directed. When, later, the troop leader received the report and notified the girls of their ancient find, one of them mused brightly, "Gee, do you suppose the old guy that banded that bird is still alive?"

This 36-year life-span may well be a world record for a wild bird. The nearest record known to me is that of another Herring Gull, in Europe, whose known age was 31 years and 11 months (see W. Rydzewski in The Ring, 3: 147-152, 1962).

