

Prevailing species: 185 Red-winged blackbirds; 161 Myrtle warblers; 101 Golden-crowned kinglets; 150 White-throated sparrows.

Most interesting species: Traills flycatcher (1); Prairie warbler (1); Rusty blackbird (1); Carolina chickadee (1); Red-headed woodpecker (1); Tennessee warbler (1).

Returns: Red-winged blackbird (7); Mockingbird (1); House finch (1); Song sparrow (1); (Total 10).

Recovery: Red-winged blackbird 662-12583, banded by Fred Lesser, at Barnegat New Jersey on 8-7-72, recovered by us on 8-22-72.

Best day was October 18th (Wednesday) with 245 birds of 21 species in 32 net hours. Since Sunday the 15th a passage of cold front was predicted and finally passed through the night of the 17th (Tuesday) with snow flurries in Western Pennsylvania. At 0700, on the morning of the 18th the temperature was 44 degrees, skies were very clear, wind was from N-NW at 8 - 10 M.P.H. Dominant species this day were White-throated sparrows (70); Golden-crowned kinglets (41); Myrtle warblers (32); Ruby-crowned kinglets (31). At 1600 all nets were closed and the birds were still coming through as heavy, if not heavier than at 1200. There was only one bander with no help.

--R.F.D.1, Cranbury Road, Cranbury, New Jersey 08512

+ + +

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The August 1973 issue was typed by our new typist, Miss Sharon L. Snyder, 5521 Hill Way, Camp Springs, Maryland 20023. Mrs. Jeff Swinebroad was instrumental in proofreading the camera copies. All titling, layout and insertion of graphs and tables has been done by the Editor. Our sincere thanks to Miss Snyder and Mrs. Swinebroad!

A Supplement to Volume 36 will be mailed to all members in good standing, following shortly after the mailing of the August issue. It will contain the descriptions and Minutes of the 50th Anniversary meeting; the By-Laws and the Membership List. (Editor)

A BIRD BANDER'S DIARY

RALPH K. BELL

One of the nice things about spring is watching it unfold. It is a thrilling time for those that enjoy the outdoors and being a birder has its advantages - the season starts earlier. In fact, it even starts in mid-winter when the Great Horned Owls can often be heard giving their love songs on warm evenings. For many years we had to drive about 2 miles to hear them but now a pair is nesting close enough that one can often be heard calling any hour of the night, even through closed windows.

Some enterprising person has found out that the Great horned owl will accept man-made stick nests and this year a friend of mine who is interested in owls, made 2 boxes approx. 24" square and 6" high. We filled them with sticks, added grapevine bark and shapped it in the form of a nest. We already have one up in a tree so that it will be well weathered by nesting time next winter.

Others are interested in providing Great Horned Owls with artificial nest sites also. EBBA member Ben Burt (Jamesville, N.Y.) wrote me last fall about this. Ben said that a man about 20 miles from him had made 8 Horned Owl nests by weaving sticks into chicken wire to form a basket and then fastened them in likely trees. More sticks were then added and this is topped off by a few sprigs of spruce or other evergreen to look like an old Red-tailed Hawk nest. So far 2 of the 8 artificial nests were successfully used by Horned Owls. Also, EBBA member Gerald Church of Eaton, New York puts up these chicken wire nests (EBBA NEWS Vol. 35, #3, page 233).

Our Red-tailed hawks were often seen circling over the farm on nice days during February and early March. I didn't find their nest last year but knew the nest wasn't far away because 2 young Red-tails would sit on posts (or electric poles) and call for food almost every day for 2 weeks during August last summer. This spring I located their nest high up in a big oak on April 8 and they were already feeding their young. On April 22, I climbed the tree (with the help of 3 ladders) and banded the 2 young. Young Red-tails are really cute and usually whimper softly while

being banded and these were no exception. One of the adults may have been shot because we never saw but one circling overhead. Two days later the adult Red-tail was observed chasing 4 Turkey vultures that were circling over the nest site. That same day our Sparrow Hawk nest box was checked and there were 2 fresh eggs. This was proof that the new small entrance opening (2 3/4" diameter) was accepted by the new female. The original entrance hole was approx. 4" in diameter and last spring a Raccoon crawled through the large hole and captured and then ate the female (EBBA NEWS, Vol 35, #3, page 166). This didn't happen this year - although the Raccoon tried it. On May 25, I noticed Raccoon tracks in the mud at the base of the tree and fresh scratches on the box. The female was in the box and I didn't lift her off the nest to check her for a band as I wanted her to feel confident that she was safe - just in case the Raccoon tried again.

Spring also has other attractions - one being the EBBA meeting and this year (1973) it was to be extra special since it was the 50th anniversary meeting and was being held at Island Beach, N.J., one of the early Operation Recovery stations. For the benefit of the newer banders, let me explain that Operation Recovery was the name given to the banding project originally started at eastern coastal points of known heavy bird concentrations in the fall. Seven temporary netting stations were first manned during August and September 1955 and Island Beach was among the 15 participating the next fall. The project was set up on the admittedly remote chances that one of the netting stations might recover a bird recently banded at another station to the north.

Stories about many of these stations in EBBA NEWS made them very desirable places to visit if time and circumstances permitted. Therefore, the EBBA meeting at Island Beach presented the opportunity to visit the place first made famous by the late Elise Dickerson.

My wife Betty enjoys the EBBA meetings and since she especially loves the beach, this was a must for her. We left home Friday morning, April 27 and drove through heavy rain for most of the 390 miles. We easily found the Island Beach Motor Lodge where Walter Bigger had made room arrangements for us long ago. It was great to see old friends again and meet the newer banders. We soon found out that Kit Price and her committee had done a lot of preliminary work and a great job getting ready for this big meeting

as everything seemed to fit into place smoothly and if there were any "hang-ups" it was not obvious to me. We were furnished maps and a history of the island - plus a long list of rules and regulations to help preserve the island in its natural state.

I must admit the place wasn't quite as I had expected it - but then most places never are. The biggest surprise was the distance between the net lanes as I had pictured most of the banding being done in one area. But after seeing the place, the advantages of the widely separated net lanes was quite obvious. I believe 9 net lanes were being manned on Saturday morning by banders who band there each fall. Many water birds were migrating overhead but the bird that thrilled me the most was the Orange-crowned warbler as I had never seen this warbler in spring plumage before.

Everyone was quite helpful to show and explain the important things in the area. Lloyd Price even took time out to give me a personal tour to the end of the island where the Barnegat Lighthouse could easily be seen.

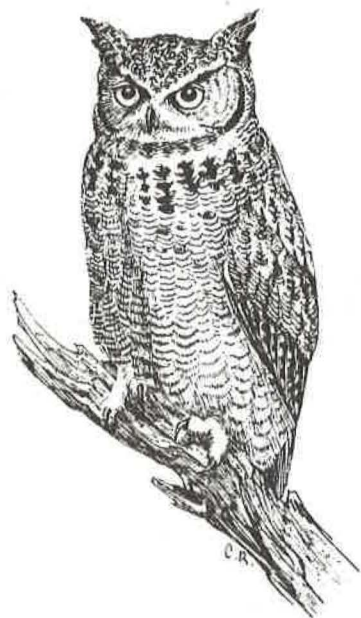
The trap and equipment displays at the Aeoleum were excellent and I especially regretted not having the time to really look over Merrill Wood's wings and tail display of various birds. Determining the correct age of some species is easy if we know exactly what to look for and Merrill's display was very good.

An interesting paper session was held at the Seaside Park School on Saturday afternoon and I'm sure we all learned something and were impressed by what others are doing. We were sorry Mary and John Schmid couldn't be there to show their movies but the time was ably filled by Kit Price explaining the contents of the book by Dr. Jonathan Dwight on "The Sequence of Plumages and Moults of the Passerine Birds of New York". Mrs. Eleanor Dater and Frank Frazier, Sr. were missed also. And I had even hoped that perhaps Dr. Paul Fluck could make this meeting. They have all contributed their bit in making EBBA what it is today.

On Sunday Betty and I took the Pine Barrens field trip as it was on the way home. We really enjoyed it as Jim and Betty Woodford have a lovely home in a grove of trees and near a lake.

They not only band lots of birds but care for a wide variety of injured birds and animals. It was a fitting close to a memorable weekend.

--R.D. 1, Box 229, Clarksville, Pa. 15322



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Thanks to the tireless energy of my cooperator and sub-permittee, Dr. Virginia K. Pierce, more than 100 House Finches were banded on the East Side of Manhattan between February 4 and May 20, 1973. At the suggestion of Dr. Paul Munding of Rockefeller University, who is studying the development of song patterns in fringilids, all but the first few males in this series were also color-banded, with sequential combinations so that individuals can be identified at a distance.

Of course if EBBA Members retrap any of these birds they will be reported in the usual way through the Bird-banding Laboratory. But if banders see color-banded male House Finches which do not enter their traps, Dr. Pierce and I would be most grateful for a post-card report, describing the color combination. We shall respond to any such report with the bird's band number and the date of banding. The bands used on the first 70 (approx.) color-coded males were of anodized aluminum, slightly larger than the F&WS band. And in all our 1973 bandings, the F&WS band is on the left leg. I hope to hear from fellow EBBA members at the address below.

--GILBERT CANT, 445 East 68th Street, New York, N.Y. 10021

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: HERRING GULLS

Herring Gulls ranging in age and color plumage from first year through fourth year are being individually marked at Groton and Stonington, Connecticut sanitary landfill areas. The gulls marked at the Groton dump have blaze orange dumb-bell shaped wing tags. The tags have a one-quarter inch black border with a black letter painted over the number, i.e.

A A

1-9 (through the letter (F)).

The letter-number system has been reversed with letters H through Z, i.e.

1 9

H-H (etc.)

Stonington gulls have blue wing tags with a one-quarter inch white border on the edge. The same letter-number sequence as Groton has been used (see above). The tags can be read with a spotting scope up to a distance of 100 yds.

Reports of sight records of these marked gulls would be greatly appreciated. Please include date, time and location of sighting, color of tag and letter-number series. The purpose is to study the patterns of behavior at the dumps, dispersal from the sites and along the Connecticut shore line, as well as nesting and roosting locations.

Reports should be sent to: Frank R. Haeni, Chief Naturalist
Thames Science Center
Center Gallows Lane
New London, Conn. 06320