

request) will appear only twice in 1974, in Winter and Summer. The Annual Membership list and the Index to Volume 37 can go into the Supplement (since we won't have any By-Laws to account with, next year).

We hope all of you had a marvelous vacation and that the banding season this fall will be a very rewarding one!

Frederick S. Schaeffer, Editor

EYE LINE ON SWAMP SPARROWS

R.C. Leberman reports that his inland population of Swamp Sparrows at Powdermill Nature Reserve in western Pennsylvania can be aged in fall by the eyeline. Clear pearly white indicates, by skull ossification, adult birds. A yellow, or yellowish-green tint is found on birds incompletely ossified and therefore SY

Stations handling coastal, or other populations should check this out in their birds, and report. Dwight (1900) says of the Southern Swamp Sparrow in first winter plumage: "Superciliary line clear olive-gray or yellow-tinged".

FEMALE COWBIRDS

Leberman has also noticed that the skulls of some SY Cowbirds are still incompletely pneumatized into at least June, and that his returns indicate these birds could be aged SY. SY males can be aged by the retention of juvenile feathers into spring, but some SY females might be aged by skulling.

Erma J. Fisk

(17101 SW 284th Street, Homestead, Fla. 33030)

THE MONK PARROT: EXPERIENCES AND MEMOIRS OF A NEW IMMIGRANT

Richard D. Brown

When asked by a friend if I would like to capture two cage birds which were showing up regularly at a feeder, little did I know what I was getting into. After all, we didn't want the poor lost pets to die from our harsh Columbus, Ohio winter weather. I was surprised and admittedly elated when I found out that the birds were parrots. If no one claimed them, I would have a couple of nice pets!

Due to rainy weather, my work schedule, and the timidity of the parrots, it took several weeks to capture the birds. The net was spread high between the five foot feeder and a big maple tree. The landlady, Mrs. N., specified that the pair had to be caught together since they were inseparable buddies. It is hard enough to catch one intelligent parrot, let alone two. As luck would have it, after catching numerous other birds and scaring the parrots away each time, I caught only one parrot. What a racket...squeals, squawks... I felt like I was killing somebody! The parrot was placed in a cage close to the feeder. After much patient waiting in a light rain, the second parrot, presumably coming to the aid of its lover, became entangled in the net.

Three weeks before this experience, I had the pleasure of netting and banding a Saw-whet Owl in my suburban backyard. The Columbus Audubon Society Rare Bird Alert had called members on their list to come see the owl at my house. Mrs. N. had contacted the Columbus Audubon Society about the parrots prior to my getting involved, to find out what kind they were, would they survive the winter, etc. No sooner than I get home with my two captives, the phone rings. "This is the Rare Bird Alert calling. A pair of Monk Parrots has been sighted near Harding Hospital in Worthington and ..." I had to interrupt. "Oh no...I have just captured the birds and they are in my basement now. What do I do?"

What do you do when people are on their way to see a new life species and you have just captured the "rare" birds,

culminating two weeks of futile efforts? After much telephoning, we had many visitors at our home that afternoon and evening to see the parrots. Also I had many explanations to give! That was my introduction to the South American Monk, Quaker, Gray-headed, or Gray-breasted Parrot or Parakeet (*Myiopsitta monachus*), the new immigrant.

The Monk is called either a parrot or parakeet because of its medium length of 11 to 12 inches. The name "monk" is presumably derived from the hood of gray color which resembles a monk's cowl (Guy, 1973). The bird is grayish-green above and yellow-green on the belly. The forehead, forecrown, cheeks, throat, and breast are quaker gray (hence the name Quaker Parrot), with some feathers having darker edges. The primaries, secondaries, and greater primary coverts are grayish-blue with the rest of the wing being grayish-green. The long, graduated tail is bluish-green. The bill has a rosy flesh color (Bedford, 1954; Bump, 1971) and is quite sharp! The sexes presumably are similar in coloration, adults and young being similarly colored and marked making it difficult to sex and age by plumage (Trimm, 1972), so far as we know.

The only variations I noted between the two captive parrots were as follows:

- bird 1 - wing, 139 mm; culmen (to cere), 19 mm
- bird 2 - wing, 135 mm; culmen (to cere), 16 mm
- bird 1 - belly between legs, yellow-green; greater primary coverts - all same color
- bird 2 - belly between legs, green; greater primary coverts - middle three light blue to brown

Monk Parrots are nonmigratory, gregarious birds often seen flocking in loose aggregations. Their flight is swift with rapid wing beats. Unlike most parrots they construct large, communal, squirrel-like nests of twigs and sticks which are used year round as a roost. Nests may be made in tree crevices or man-made structures, for example, behind shutters, on telephone poles, abandoned cranes, etc. Each pair has its own private apartment where 4 to 6 white eggs are laid. Often these nests are shared with other occupants such as opossums and tree ducks (Bedford, 1954; Bump, 1971; Trimm, 1972).

Monk Parrots are native to southern Bolivia, southern Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and most of Argentina. Its range extends from 20° to 48° south latitude which corresponds well with our 24° to 49° north latitudes. The birds are apparently tolerant of extreme weather conditions, being able to survive temperatures ranging 9° to 112° F. and precipitations ranging 6.8 to 69.1 inches per year in South America (Bump, 1971).

In their native range the parrots may be found in open woods, palm groves, dry acacia scrubs, evergreen hardwood forests, agricultural areas, and orchards. They are adaptable to a wide range of habitats with the only limiting factor being food. They eat fruits, grains, legumes, seeds, insects, plant buds, and some vegetables (Bump, 1971).

Because Monk Parrots are intelligent, friendly, easily handled, tamed, and cared for, they have been popular as cage birds. They can be taught to talk although the voice may be harsh and irritating to the ear (Bedford, 1954; Trimm, 1972). Each year large numbers are shipped to Europe and North America. In 1968 twelve thousand Monk Parrots were shipped to the United States alone (Banks, 1970). It is thought that immigration occurred in 1967 when a crate full of the birds was broken during handling at the Kennedy Airport, releasing some to the wild (Trimm, 1972). Perhaps pet releases and escapees have added to the numbers.

The parrots are adaptable, hardy, and quite capable of surviving since our climate in North America is comparable to that of its native range. The smart birds have already synchronized their nesting season to that of our hemisphere. It is conceivable that they could become established in most of the United States. The Monk has already been reported from New York, New Jersey, Virginia, Maryland, Ohio, Michigan, Nebraska, North Dakota, and parts of Carolina and New England (Trimm, 1972). According to Wayne Trimm (personal communication) the greatest concentration of the parrots is around the New York City area "where there are many reports of successful nesting." It is reported that one colony contains several hundred of the birds. An article by Mr. Trimm in the June-July issue of The Conservationist will give a map showing the present geographical distribution of the Monk Parrot in the United States. Since it is

thought that food is the only limiting factor, the parrot has survived our winters nicely by frequenting feeders. They are pretty birds and who wouldn't mind having several parrots at their feeding stations during the winter!

Sounds like a good immigrant to have around and perhaps replace the Carolina Parakeet niche? As with any new species introduction, there is concern about ecological competition with native species and possible economic competition with man. Apparently there is great concern for the latter since the Monk Parrot has already firmly established its infamy in South America and England (Bedford, 1954). It substantially damages corn, sorghum, millet, sunflowers, citrus and other fruit crops in Argentina. Damage estimates are generally between 2 to 15 percent, but have gone as high as 45 percent. Control has been attempted by shooting, netting, snaring, burning nests, using repellents and toxic baits. Even bounties have been paid for each pair of feet collected. All of these attempts have so far been unsuccessful (Godoy, 1963).

The parrots are inclined to be aggressive and are said to compete strongly with other birds (Bedford, 1954). They have even been known to harass dogs and cats (good for them!) (Trimm, 1972).

The Department of the Interior (Bump, 1971) warns that "if this species should become abundant, serious damage to agricultural and orchard crops can be expected. This might be moderate in the North but increasing as its range extended south and west. Common sense clearly indicates that this potential pest, should be eliminated in the wild and its further importation prohibited before it has become well established and thus very costly if not impractical to eradicate."

Clearly there are mixed emotions. A state audubon executive director has been quoted as saying, "It ought to be trapped or shot; it ought to be eradicated" (Guy, 1973). The New York Federation of Bird Clubs were happy to add this new bird to their breeding list and many people enjoy feeding the parrots. Members of the Columbus Audubon Society were also divided on the issue... and I was in the middle! Two captured immigrants on my hands.

Are they escaped pets or since they are now breeding in the wild, do we treat them as we do Starlings and House Sparrows? Do I keep them or do I band and release the potential pests?

After much consideration and discussion with professional naturalists it was decided to go ahead and band them. This was done on 27 November 1972. No formal statement had been issued by the Fish and Wildlife Service as to the status of these birds, so we felt it best to leave them as they were. Also people were desirous to see them. There had been several different sightings in our area and with the birds banded we could at least keep track of one pair. It was definitely established that a third parrot was present also with a nest. According to Wayne Trimm (personal communication) there are several other records for our state.

A size 3A band was used. It fit a little snug, but was the best size available. Size 3 and 3B were too small, whereas size 4 was too long and would not permit the leg to bend because of the short tarsus. On my banding schedule a note of explanation was given in the remarks section. The BBL replied by stating that "none have been banded before" and the Monk Parrot was assigned an AOU number of its own...382.6! However...due to an increase in numbers and geographical distribution in the United States, concern over these immigrants has increased considerably.

An article in the 7 April 1973 New York Times stated that "the State of New York has declared war against the Monk Parrot.... but the decision to 'eliminate' the birds in the state has not been made public, mainly because of the outcry that state officials are sure will raise among bird-lovers." Eradication strategies will take place in the main area of concentration: New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. According to Ron Ogden (personal communication) of the Fish and Wildlife Service, the State of Virginia has already removed known Monk Parrots from the wild and the State of Michigan is in the process of doing the same. The Monk Parrot is a state problem as the federal government has no control over nonmigratory nonnative species. It is thus left up to each state to control the Monk Parrot as it sees fit.

Because of the definite eradication decisions on the part of state governments, with the assistance of the Fish and Wildlife Service, I called the BBL to see how bird banders should treat this

immigrant now that "war has been declared." Brian Sharp indicated that no formal decision had been made by the BBL, but no doubt a statement would be sent to banders, in the near future. At present, it is felt that banders should hold the birds so as to prevent their further spread and breeding. Then contact your state wildlife agency if you don't desire to keep them as pets.

This pretty bird is clearly in a dichotomous situation, with more strikes against him than for him. Bump (1971) states that "This is clearly a situation where the bird lover or pet fancier must forego the pleasure of keeping or observing in the countryside this interesting parakeet lest it become another expensive pest."

REFERENCES

- Banks, R. C. 1970. Birds imported into the United States in 1968. Sp. Sc. Report - Wildlife, no. 136, 64 p.
- Bedford, D. 1954. Parrots and parrot-like birds. All Pets, Inc., Fond du Lac, Wisc.
- Bump, G. 1971. The South American Monk, Quaker, or Gray-headed Parakeet. U.S. Dept. of Interior Wildlife Leaflet No. 496.
- Faber, H. 1973. State acts to wipe out Monk Parakeet. 7 April, N.Y. Times, pp. 1, 41.
- Godoy, J. C. 1963. Fauna silvestre. Consigo Federal de inversiones. Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- Guy, D. 1973. Have you seen a big green parrot come by this way? Yankee Magazine, March issue: 74-77.
- Trimm, W. 1972. The Monk Parrot. The Conservationist, 26: 4-5.

--322 East Clearview Avenue, Worthington, Ohio 43085

A STUDY OF WINTERING BROAD-WINGED HAWKS IN SOUTHEASTERN FLORIDA 1968-1973

Eric Creighton Tabb

This paper presents results of a study of wintering Broad-winged Hawks (Buteo p. platypterus) which began in December, 1968 and is still in progress. During that period 135 Broad-winged Hawks were captured, weighed, measured, sexed and banded.

These observations were obtained as a part of a larger research program on South Florida raptorial birds which involves banding, habitat study, behavior observations, and food and feeding studies. The general study area is peninsular Florida south of Lake Okeechobee and the major effort has been devoted to wintering populations.

The research had hardly begun in the winter of 1968-69 before it became apparent that substantial numbers of Broad-winged Hawks wintered in Dade and Monroe counties between Miami and Key West. These offered an unusual opportunity to study a little-known species in the northern-most reach of its tropical winter range.

WINTER RANGE AND HABITAT

Our observations show that Broad-winged Hawks are largely limited to extreme southeastern Florida once the fall migration terminates in late November. Wintering individuals do not range much north of Miami nor west into the sawgrass and cypress of the Everglades (Figure 1). These observations are supported by a general lack of sightings by Audubon Christmas bird counts (Table 1). In the cases where single individuals have been reported outside the South Florida area they usually occur in habitat resembling the preferred forest habitat of the Florida Keys, a good deal of which is found along the Indian River of East-Central Florida and in the riverine forests along the lower West Florida coast.

Within the preferred wintering range Broad-winged Hawks may be found on all the larger Florida Keys to Key West and on