

before and who had, in fact, scoffed at my interests came to be all atwitter like the stereotyped grandmother because as he had been sitting on a stream bank trying his luck at a very overflowing trout stream had had a Blackburnian Warbler, male, alight on his toe as he was fishing. Not only did this fellow get a very good look at the bird, but it flew from his foot hawking some unseen spot in the air and then returned to his toe to spend a minute or two preening.

On Monday the 27th the weather was still unchanged and a fellow brought me an extremely bedraggled mass of black and orange feathers for identification. There were the remains of a male Redstart taken from the stomach of an eel in Graham Lake. It would be nice to report that finally everything dawned clear, which of course it did sooner or later, but not until Thursday, May 30th. Then it cleared with a strong cold NW wind and temperatures in the mid forties only. After it cleared it was different than after other storms which last for one or two days. A walk around the property found no birds as there had been only 10 days before. The bushes were silent and my nets on the first of June had 21 birds with only 2 warblers.

Although major weather kills like this are perfectly natural, their function of thinning out a population could be nothing but detrimental at a time when bird populations are in trouble due to other environmental problems. A migrating warbler from South America, which has just seen most of its wintering habitat destroyed leaving nothing for it to return to, does not need to have half its population wiped out at its northern grounds. Of course, this is nature's way of reducing numbers so that there will be a smaller number to occupy the decreased area of the wintering grounds this coming winter. The species will probably survive but in numbers so reduced that it will be observable to birders and banders in the northern hemisphere. If any good could be found in the weather kill of May 1974, it is simply because many people were suddenly made aware of birds. The unusual tameness of a starving bird allowed many who had never seen a bird close-up to get that opportunity. As a bander, however, I am more alert to survival factors and I felt that this spring was a major disaster to our bird population which is noticeable in the fall banding and may possibly be noted for several seasons to come.

--Box 373, Sorrento, Me. 04677

IN PURSUIT OF THE SHORT-EARED OWL

By G.C. Meloney

The first week in August, 1974, a man got off the ferry at Vineyard Haven, Marthas Vineyard, and looked about him. His binoculars were in a prominent position on his chest. He approached the nearest taxi man. "I want to see the Short-eared Owl," he said. "I read that it is here on the island. Do you know where I can find it?" "No, I don't", my nephew said, "But I know some one who probably does. She is a bird-bander." With that he gave the man my telephone number.

I was about to leave for a dinner engagement, so I said I was very sorry I could not meet him and drive him to Katama. I gave him the names of several other birders, but he was unable to contact any of them. Then he came back to my nephew. "Do you know where Katama is?" "Yes, at Edgartown South Beach". "Could you drive me there?" "Happy to," was the reply. "How long will it take? I have to be back in Providence tonight." "I think we can make it."

The man introduced himself a Glen D. Eller of Elizabethton, Tennessee, who wanted to add a new bird to his life list. He evidently envisioned Marthas Vineyard as a small sandy island somewhat like Penikese, where he could hike from one end to another in a short time.

They drove fast, going through a part of the picturesque town of Edgartown and on out to the plains parallel to the island's south shore, where they cruised around for a short time. Sure enough, they spotted a short-eared owl. Mr. Eller was ecstatic, and searching farther they came upon two more which showed themselves off from all sides to satisfy any bird watcher.

The drive back to the ferry was even faster, and my nephew, who had been on many gull-banding trips, practically pushed Mr. Eller over the gangplank as it was about to be hauled in. This was the last boat that day over to "The Outer World".

--200 Chatterton Pkwy., White Plains, N.Y. 10606

OYSTER SHELLS ATTRACT BARN SWALLOWS

By John P. Merrill

In early May 1971, I noticed Barn Swallows (*Hirundo rustica*) coming to a board on the ground in back of my trailer and picking up small pieces of plaster of Paris. I put up a mist net and caught and banded my first four (4) birds on June 15, 1971.

From 1971 - 74 this same net site produced one hundred (100) un-banded Barn Swallows as follows:

TABLE I: Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) Handlings

	1971	1972	1973	1974
First capture	15 June	14 May	30 May	19 May
Banding				
Adult males	11	12	7	11
Adult females	20	7	7	9
Adults (unkown)	2	4	1	3
Immatures	2	1	0	3
Totals	35	24	15	3
Returns		2	0	8