

EBBANUS



A Friendly Report to Members of the
Eastern Bird Banding Association

January, 1941

"Let Us Band Together"

Vol. 4, No. 1

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Treasurer: George Dock, Jr., 119 Brite Avenue, Scarsdale, New York
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BANDED SPARROW FREES MAN FROM JAIL

By Rev. Edward Stoehr, O.F.M.Cap.

One day last March, while talking to "Mac" Updike, a policeman stationed around this University in Washington, D.C., Fr. Fabian Kekich, my assistant, came running through the woods with a Song Sparrow in his hands. The officer watched as we banded it, jotted down the species, date, number and trap, etc.

A few minutes later "Mac" noticed smoke curling up in the woods nearby. Upon being informed that it came from a shack containing hoboes, he decided to investigate. "Mac" routed the inmates and destroyed their shack.

A month later, while refueling my traps, one of the friars came running to deluge me with questions. Someone had committed a crime... Could I be certain from my banding records as to the exact day during which the incidents in the preceding paragraph took place.

We knew from memory that the eviction took place in the week following Easter for at that time we were running our traps beyond the usual limits. Looking up the week of March 23rd, the records proved that only 1 Song Sparrow was caught that week. We recalled that Fabian had brought the bird about a sixth of a mile to me to band since I had preceded him with the kit. We remembered our explanation to "Mac" about it. There stood our record: "Song Sparrow, ad. #40-115643, March 27th, 1940, H."

On March 27th, a home downtown was broken into, a woman badly frightened and a young lad brutally beaten. Leroy Henderson, colored, was arrested and identified by the 6-year-old child. The child might be mistaken. Henderson proclaimed his innocence. As proof, he admitted he was ousted from a shack near the University at the time of the crime. "Mac" was interviewed by the defendant's counsel, remembered Henderson but wasn't certain of the day or time. "Mac" did recall our presence, and the banding incident. Henderson's lawyers were soon on the trail. Visiting our station they consulted our records in detail. We are proud to relate that they accepted our evidence and lauded the banding work. Their letter received later completes the story:

"My dear father: I wish to acknowledge my sincere appreciation of the cooperation you and your brothers afforded me and my colleague during our investigation of the case of The United States vs. Leroy Henderson.

"It is with profound sensitivity that I write to tell you that the defendant was released from prison on April 27 and completely vindicated of the crime. The District Attorney dismissed the case because he was thoroughly convinced Henderson was not guilty of the charge against him. I might add that Henderson has a little Song Sparrow to thank for his freedom."

A BELIEVE IT OR NOT RECOVERY

"On June 8, 1936, I banded a brood of nestling Starlings near Ottawa, Ontario. One of the bands, No. B-220234, which I used on one of this brood was found "among feathers" near Sherrill, N.Y., about April 24, 1940, by Mr. Bernard Hennessy."

"I had a brother christened Bernard and my wife's maiden name was Bernard."

"Of the countless millions of birds moving about, only a very small percentage of which are banded, it had to be a namesake of mine who found a Starling that I had banded. Talk about the odds of one drawing a winning ticket in a sweepstake! I think the odds are not nearly so great as the remote chance involved in this bird-banding recovery."

T. S. Hennessy, 455 Laurier Ave.W., Ottawa, Ontario.

LET'S EDUCATE TOGETHER

Fellow Bander:

Dr. C. Brooke Worth, President of our organization has asked me to serve as chairman of the Education Committee for the E.B.B.A. I need your help.

We are all interested in spreading information concerning banding to as many people as possible so that our efforts may produce more dividends. The Public Schools of the U.S. provide an excellent opportunity for us to reach great numbers of individuals at an age when impressions count for the most. It seems desirable that we take definite action along these lines.

Plans are now under way to encourage the formation of Junior Banding Clubs in Secondary Schools, under the leadership of teacher-banders and sponsored by the E.B.B.A. Some pioneer work has already been done, and at least one such club is now in operation at Manhasset (L.I.) High School. (See Ebba Nus, Nov., 1940).

Suggestions for the formation of Junior Banding Clubs are available to those interested. A letter explaining your desires, and including a stamped envelope will bring a copy and place you on my mailing list for additional material.

If you are already running a successful banding club, please write and tell me all about it. I'll pass the information on to others. Are there other activities which might be used to further our cause? If you have suggestions, please send them along.

Dr. Worth and also Dr. Lincoln has pointed out that we are conservationists and protectors of wildlife, and as such must work very carefully in all matters where the welfare of living birds is at stake. Teacher-banders who wish to operate successful clubs must supervise most carefully all activities in which children are allowed to trap and handle birds. A single unfortunate accident, knowledge of which reaches the public, may spell the doom of an otherwise successful club. The high standards for accuracy now set by banders must also be maintained.

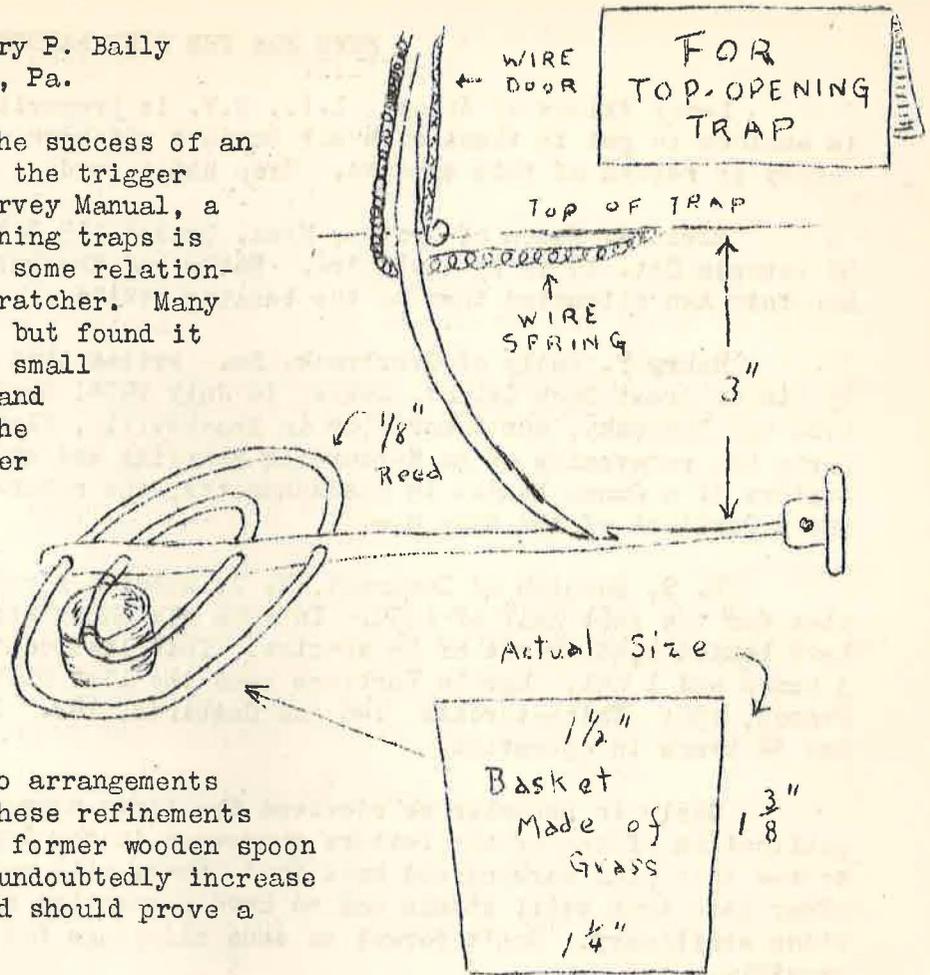
Address - Mr. Jesse V. Miller
Junior-Senior High School,
Memorial Place, Manhasset, L.I., N.Y.
Or drop in and pay me a visit.

ANOTHER COUNCILLOR IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

By appointment of our President, Mr. Robert C. McClanahan of the Biological Survey, assistant to Dr. Lincoln, becomes our organization's Councillor for the District of Columbia, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia. This is a very important area in our territory and we look forward to even greater reports from its banders under the leadership of Mr. McClanahan.

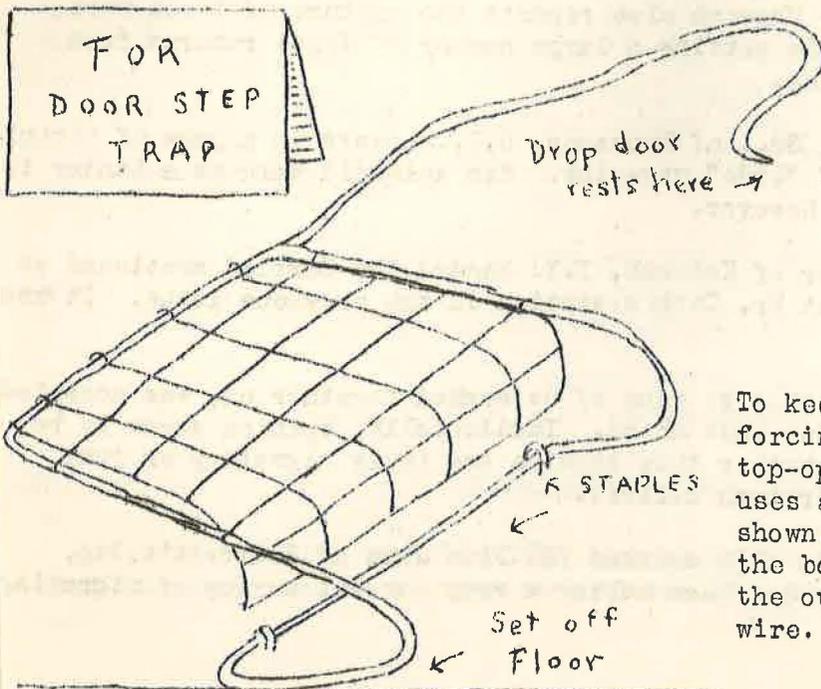
TRIGGERS by Henry P. Baily
Overbrook, Pa.

Every bander knows that the success of an automatic trap depends on the trigger apparatus. In the old Survey Manual, a perch trigger for top-opening traps is depicted which represents some relationship to a Chinese back-scratcher. Many of us have used this type but found it far from satisfactory, as small birds often disdained it and hopped to the bottom of the trap non-stop, while larger birds, such as Jays, soon learned to evade it. Some banders then switched to a forked twig, which was only a little better.



On this page are shown two arrangements designed by Mr. Baily. These refinements are just as modern as the former wooden spoon was obsolete. They will undoubtedly increase the number of captures and should prove a boon to banders.

The reed for the top-opening trigger can be purchased at any art or school supply house for about 58¢ per lb. (Ebba will supply name and address on request). This trigger should be made at least as large as the top-opening of the trap and should be kept 3" below the top of the trap.



Mr. Baily uses several traps with a wooden floor both on the ground and hung in trees. In place of the conventional door-step trigger, he uses a trigger as shown.

The wire on which the drop door rests holds the step off balance so that the slightest weight sets it off.

To keep larger birds from forcing their way out of a top-opening trap, Mr. Baily uses a figure 4 latch as shown. This is fastened to the bottom of the trap on the outside and is made of wire.



NEWS FOR THE BIRD BANDERS

Leroy Wilcox of Speonk, L.I., N.Y. is preparing a paper on Ospreys and is anxious to get in touch with all banders who have data pertaining to the recovery or return of this species. Drop him a card.

Edwin A. Mason of Groton, Mass. banded 115 Robins in October, getting 98 between Oct. 19 to 25 inclusive. Water was the bait but plantings of Mountain Ash attracted them to the banding station.

Henry P. Baily of Overbrook, Pa., writes that a Leeches Petrel, banded by him on Great Duck Island, Maine, in July 1935, has been recovered by Miss Lisa von Borowsky, our Councillor in Brooksville, Florida. Mr. Baily also reports the recoveries of an 8-year-old Starling and another 5 years old; the capture of a Junco banded in Massachusetts; the return of a 6 year old Junco and a Cardinal of the same age.

B. S. Bowdish of Demarest, N. J. submits a report of his banding activities for the last half of 1939. In this six month period, Mr. and Mrs. Bowdish have banded 1,485 birds of 59 species. This list contains 21 kinds of warblers, 3 hawks and 1 owl. Myrtle Warblers head the list with 306 and are followed by Juncos, 190; White-throats, 146 and Catbirds, 142. The Bowdish Banding Station has 34 traps in operation.

Early in December we received the first newspaper clipping showing the publication of one of the letters suggested in the September NUS. We are glad to see this plan working and hope that others will send out these letters. The offer made then still stands and we have a quantity all ready for you on Association stationery. Don't forget to send clippings for our scrap-book whenever possible.

Miss Dorothy Caldwell of Mount McGregor, N.Y. started her winter banding station on the first of December and reports a number of returns.

Robert K. Ungemah of White Plains, N.Y. is being continually surprised by a Potter 4-cell trap. One day it caught a Sharp-shinned Hawk and a few days later a good size rat. The bait which caught the Sharp-shinned happened to be a live Junco that was trapped in the adjoining cell just a few minutes before the capture of the hawk. Mr. Ungemah also reports the capture of three more Cardinals and states that he is getting a large number of Junco returns from such birds banded in the Spring.

Dr. Oliver L. Austin, Sr., of Tuckahoe, N.Y. appears in a page of picture in the December 23rd issue of "Life" magazine. His splendid work as a bander is only mentioned incidentally, however.

Mrs. Edward M. Fielder of Katonah, N.Y. banded the Cowbird mentioned as a foreign recovery captured at Mr. Dock's station in the previous issue. It was banded May 4, 1940.

The Blue Jay article that so many of us worked together on, was accepted for publication in Bird-Banding last month. Incidentally, opinion seems to be fairly evenly divided as to whether this species are truly migratory or just nomadic. Much can be said for both beliefs.

Edward Frey on Oct. 5, 1939 counted 786 Blue Jays at Sterrett's Gap, Cumberland Co., Pa., where he has been making a very careful survey of migrating hawks for several years.

FISHING FOR DUCKS IN FLORIDA

By

Major George D. Robinson

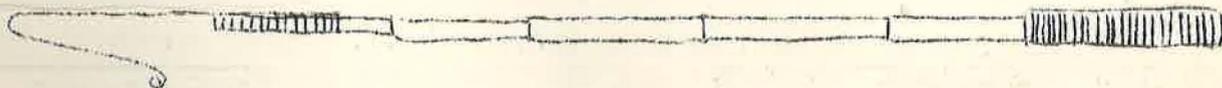
At this time of year we have large numbers of ducks in Florida waters; in fact, many of them come yearly to spend the winter with domesticated waterfowl on the lakes in our public parks. Most of the winter visitors are Lesser Scaup and Mallard.

Naturally, waterfowl which are hunted in open season in different parts of the country offer a high percentage of "returns", provided of course, they can be caught and banded, and the thought occurred to me that there should be some way to catch these ducks that inhabit our lakes in Florida in the winter.

First, I tried enticing the birds to the edge of the lakes with bread and grain, and then I made passes at them with a small crabnet. This procedure was soon abandoned on account of the large quantities of food necessary to bring about a capture. Also, I found that it was not long before the birds became so scared that they would not come close to shore while I was there. It was then that I hit upon the idea of using a "shepherd's crook" and it was not long before I was catching ducks at the rate of one every few minutes.

Below is a rough sketch of the type of crook that I use.

It is made out of stiff iron wire commonly used in the coat-hangers provided by dry cleaning establishments, and mounted on a five-foot length of bamboo. I find that it is best to wrap the handle end so that it can be held securely even when ones hands become wet.



I find that if the crook is held just below the surface of the water with one hand, while the other is employed in throwing bread on the water near the business end of the crook, the birds will swim closer to shore than if the wire end of the crook is exposed. With practice and patience it will be found that one can slip the crook around the legs or neck, or sometimes, in the bend of the wing, and yank the birds out of water in a jiffy without any danger of injuring them. Not one bird among the many hundreds that I have caught in this manner have suffered the slightest injury. I might mention that if grain is used as a bait in clear water, it is best to snag the birds by the neck while they are diving for the grain.

The above mentioned method can undoubtedly be employed on any body of water where birds can be lured in close to shore but it is best to feed them at regular intervals for several days before attempting to catch any.

Major George D. Robinson

625 Fourth St. North, St. Petersburg, Fla.

MORE MEMBERS MEAN MORE PAGES

If there is anything that appears in the NUS that you don't like, tell your secretary about it. If you like the NUS, tell others and bring in another member or two.

"EBBA NUS"
Eastern Bird Banding
Association

Geoffrey Gill, Sec'y.
Overlook Dr., Huntington
Long Island, New York

Sec. 562 P. L. & R.



Dr. Dayton Stone
New York State Museum
Albany
N. Y.