

EBBA NEWS



A FRIENDLY REPORT ISSUED MONTHLY TO THE MEMBERS
OF THE EASTERN BIRD BANDING ASSOCIATION

REACHING
OVER
375
BANDERS
EVERY MONTH

December 1943

"LET US BAND TOGETHER"

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IT'S CHRISTMAS AGAIN

Not alone do the birds fly, - but months fly by, too. It hardly appears possible that it is time for jolly St. Nick to visit us all again, yet it is so. Here we are, closing out our sixth volume, with 1944 just around the corner.

Remarkable as this may seem to many of us, we bow to the Western Association who will start their 19th volume and to the Inland Association, with a list of 15 volumes completed. As "the baby" of this trio of bird banding "news-letters" it is our intention "to be good", despite youthful tendencies to accent "the sillier side of things".

With this issue we have learned to say "news" without stumbling over it. Thanks to our many members, their help and patience, we are growing up. "Ye Ed" hopes the issues of the past 12 months have been worthy of the member's attention. In sending you, one and all, his most cordial Christmas greetings, a better, a brighter and possibly a bigger volume is planned for 1944.

BANDING NOMENCLATURE SHOULD BE STANDARDIZED

The use of banding terms has been sufficiently misleading by some banders as to make definitions of standardized terms necessary. It is essential that all banders adopt these terms, as defined, that their records are comparable. One bander banded a bird in December and retrapped it in February, reporting it as a "return"; it was a repeat. Other banders are confused when reporting percentage returns, or by other expressions.

There has been no one definite term signifying that a bander has trapped a bird banded elsewhere; for that circumstance the term "RESCUE" is herewith suggested.

The following banding terms and definitions are the directions and explanations of Mr. Frederick C. Lincoln, in charge of Migratory Bird Investigations, Fish and Wildlife Service:-

REGULAR BANDING: (Banding) - The use of numbered Service bands only.

COLOR BANDING: - Color band or bands used with Service band (For use only in special studies)

REPEAT: - A re-trap within the same season, (Summer, winter or migration period), of a bird that obviously or possible has been in the vicinity of the station (radius of 5 miles) since it was trapped in that same season. It may have

been banded during a previous season, but had been trapped before during the season when classed as a Repeat.

RETURN:- Re-trap at the station of banding after the lapse of a migration season. Some persons call this a "station return", but the one word will suffice. SIGHT RETURNS, that is of colored banded birds, should be reported as such.

RECOVERY:- The recapture by any means, trapping, shooting or finding, at a point distant from the banding station. These records usually reach the bander from the Washington office. Banders should not employ the term "Return" to these records.

RESCUE:- The trapping by a bander of a bird which was banded by some other bander.

RETURN PERCENTAGE:- The percent of birds of a given species, or of all species, banded at a station that return thereto in successive seasons. In calculating such percentages, bandings of the current season should, of course, be excluded. Individual cases may be expressed as Returns-I (those which return the first year after banding): Return-II (those which return two years after banding).

RETURN RATIO:- The ratio of returning banded birds, of one or all species, to the total number of birds, of one or all species, banded at the station during a current year or season. This should not be confused with "Return Percentage".

The record files at Washington classify all "Returns", "Recoveries" and "Rescues" as returns, meaning useable data. For any special analysis these groups are considered separately. This should always be done, reporting the groups separately, in any publication.

Harold B. Wood, M.D.
Harrisburg, Penna.

NOTES ON THE SCARLET Tanager

Raymond T. Fuller of Winterton, N. Y. writes: "During three seasons I have caught Scarlet Tanagers in overhead traps (top-opening?) by using red cherries as bait in cherry season. The nestlings appear to be either unusually precocious or easily startled from nests, or, due to the sketchy character of most nests, are frequently tossed out, by wind; because, during the past 10 years, I have found quite a number of these nestlings. Usually they are unable to fly at all, but lustily calling and ably hustling along the ground and through the underbrush. Have others noticed this?"

On Aug. 10, '41, both my wife and myself tried to locate the insistent distress call of a nestling bird for over an hour, within a circle 100 ft. in diameter, at times being sure the bird was high overhead, on the ground, in waist-high bushes, etc., only, after giving it up, defeated, finally to see this tiny flightless Tanager nestling 2 ft. from the ground in the very center of the area we had searched. Never have I known more completely baffling ventriloquism. This nestling, banded, was then put in a 4-cell Potter, and its mother captured 5 minutes later, while bringing it food... Now, one year later, Aug. 15, '42, an almost identical proceeding was repeated within 50 ft. of the previous spot; another flightless nestling located in a small bush was banded, placed in the same trap and its mother captured.---She was the same female banded here in 1941! Therefore, it would seem that female tanagers choose the breeding area for this pair were mated for more than one season.

LANTERN SALES HAVE BEEN VERY GOOD

In the Oct. issue, an item was carried regarding a bird winter feeding gadget, called a "Bird Saving Lantern". It is a pleasure to report that both EBBA and INLAND Associations have been instrumental in selling a goodly number of these little "Lanterns". By such sales the treasuries of the respective associations derive some assistance through commissions. As of Dec. 1st EBBA had sold 48 "Lanterns" and INLAND had sold 6. These figures are given for the record and are not meant as a comparative comparison. EBBA's thanks go particularly to Prof. and Mrs. Dayton Stoner of Albany, N. Y. who have been especially cooperative and have sent in several orders. Dr. Harold B. Wood of Harrisburg, Pa., and his friend, Hal H. Harrison, President of the Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania, have also caused many orders to come our way. On behalf of our association, our thanks go to every bander who has helped with this project. We might add that there are still a few more "lanterns" available.

When thinking of our treasury, it should be mentioned that this month is the annual "dues collection month". Treasurer, "Bob" Ungemah already has the membership bills in the mail. It is requested that all members take care of this little matter promptly, so that your officers can plan for 1944 and be assured that the necessary funds will be on hand to carry out the plans.

"JOE" HICKEY HAS WRITTEN THE BOOK

Hailed with delight by everyone interested in birds, the Oxford University Press has just published the first American book to describe the modern art of bird watching by Joseph J. Hickey. Mr. Hickey is a member of EBBA and a former officer of our association. "A GUIDE TO BIRD WATCHING" is a "must" book for every bander. About one-sixth of the contents specifically pertains to banding but the whole 262 pages will be found helpful to all banders. Lack of space prevents us from telling you how really worthwhile this book is. It is certain that many reviews will appear in the quarterlies doing justice to Mr. Hickey's book very soon. The proof of a pudding is in the eating they say, and with a book, --- well, here is how you order it: "A Guide to Bird Watching." By Joseph J. Hickey. Illus. by Frances Lee Jacques. Oxford University Press, 114 Fifth Ave., New York, 11, N. Y. \$3.50

TWO MORE RESCUES

Albert E. Clattenburg, Jr., of Washington, D. C., writes, "Blue Jay, No. 39-367320, banded Aug. 3, 1940 at Montvale, N. J. by the late Carl A. Pedersen, was trapped by me here in the most excellent condition on May 1, 1943. --- Presumably this Blue Jay met a southern belle when wintering here and stayed on." -- Shades of Ol' Black Joe! To think that we doubted that Mockingbirds, wandering up north here, whistle "I wish I was in Dixie."

Richard Fischer of Flushing, L. I., N. Y. writes, "I caught an adult male Catbird No. 41-124458 here on November 21st." This Catbird was banded as an immature at "Ye Ed's" station on August 13th, 1941. This bird must be a "rugged individual" and immune to all southern blandishments. Mr. Fischer, being one of those very eligible bachelors could not be expected to advise the poor bird, but if "Ye Ed" ever gets his hands on him again, Mr. Catbird will be told where to be in November.

Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm Lerch of Penn Yan, N. Y. report an all-time high for their station. So far they have banded 1,504 for the calendar year and caught 153 White-throats. This last figure is more than their grand total for this species taken during the past five years.

COMMENTS ON GEORGIA SWIFT BANDING

In EBBA for Feb., 1943, I noted with interest that Raymond J. Fleetwood in trapping Chimney Swifts during the fall of 1942 at Macon, Ga., had taken 3 individuals which we banded at Memphis, Tenn. One was banded here Sept. 22, 1940, another on Oct. 18, 1941. The third, No. 41-44140, was tentatively credited to us. It happens that this bird was banded at Memphis on Sept. 26, 1943, by Franklin McCamey, Mrs. Coffey, and other Tennessee Ornithological Society members, who trapped a flock of about 2400 Swifts while the writer was at Ft. Bragg, N. C. McCamey and those who could stay, found it an all day job, so it is not known when this particular bird was released, but 2 days later it went down a chimney at Macon, Ga. On the following morning, Sept. 29, 1942, Mr. Fleetwood found and recorded its presence. This is an air-line distance of about 400 miles.

One other Memphis banded Swift has been retrapped in Georgia. 36-37505, banded Oct. 8, 1936, was trapped and released May 13, 1941 at Milledgeville by Miss Mabel T. Rogers. In remaining EBBA territory there are casual records from North Carolina to New York, with proportionately more in the Northeastern territory.

-Lt. Ben B. Coffey, Jr., O.C.S., Dept. of Tactics, Ft. Sill, Okla.

MORE NEWS ABOUT THE WHITE-THROATS

We are happy to say that data on White-throats continues to arrive to add the collection of records. Raymond Fleetwood of Round Oak, Ga. trapped his first White-throat of the season on Nov. 13, when he banded 2 and another on the following day. He would have had 2 more but a Screech Owl got in his trap at the same time and ate 2 White-throats. He first saw them around on Oct. 12. Chandler S. Robbins of Bowie, Md. reports that they have trapped 574 new ones up to Nov. 15th. Nine returns were taken from previous years. Most of these returns are believed to be wintering birds and it is interesting to note that a series of 6 banded within a few days of each other all returned. Rev. Baechle of Collegeville, Ind., mentioned in a previous issue, now reports 213 new White-throats banded between Oct. 1st and Nov. 3rd, 1943. Selah Lester of East Hampton, L. I., N. Y., writes, "The probing into White-throat history helped me.--It drove 24 into my traps,--more of them here during a few days in October than ever before." Note this current total is four times the number taken by Mr. Lester during the last 3 seasons.

New additions to the list of bandings reported in the 2 previous issues:

Bander	Place of Banding	Seasons	Number	Returns
Daniel Smiley, Jr.	Mohonk Lake, N. Y.	6 approx.	760	0
George Dock, Jr.	Scarsdale, N. Y.	-	383	1 - X
Albert E. Clattenburg, Jr.	Washington, D. C.	3	64	1
Total brought forward from Nov. issue			22,128	230
			23,335	232

X - Mr. Dock lists 8 returns, but 7 of these are in the November to February or December to March class, and are not listed here as such returns have not been considered as true returns in previous listings. It is possible that some of these did migrate and pass through the station going both north and south, but it seems more plausible that all wintered within the same general area within a few miles of the station. While White-throats appear scarce thereabouts in mid-winter, his records show that he has had them enter his trap in every month from October to May.

NEWS OF THE BIRD BANDERS

Stanley Grierson of Katonah, N. Y., injured his back while in service and has received an honorable discharge. He returned home in August and he looks forward to employment in a museum just as soon as he completely recovers.

P. K. Garland of Demarest, N. J., also known as Patrick "Skeets" Keohan Garland has also returned home with an honorable discharge from the service. He is already doing a little banding and EBBA hopes that it won't be long before he hits his "old banding stride".

Selah Lester of East Hampton, L. I., N. Y., reports a big flight of Bluebirds passing by his place on Oct. 31st. He writes: "Hundreds of them all day,--- never saw a flight of them like this before". Jesse V. Miller of Manhasset, (approx. 50 miles further east), also reports a large flight of them passing him about the same time.

JUNCOS NUMEROUS THIS YEAR - WATCH THEIR BILLS

According to reports from several banders there was a big October flight of Juncos this year. Selah Lester of East Hampton reported hundreds present and had banded 30 by Nov. 8th; 30 miles west of Lester, "Ye Ed" trapped 83 and a return from last year by Nov. 18th, - 4 times as many as the total taken last year. Jess Miller at Manhasset 20 miles further west also reports this species very numerous with a large number banded. Another report from R. T. Fuller of Winterton, N. Y., dated Nov. 5th states:

"At dusk today I had banded my 66th Junco for this Fall's trapping. Am being much puzzled on border cases between Immature (1943 nestlings) and late moulted adults (pre-1943) females. I wonder if I've hit upon a distinguishing mark for Autumn immatures. I think I notice that specimens which appear most as if they might be Autumn-immatures have the upper mandible whiter (altho its tip is always black) Adult male and females always seem to have solid dark upper mandible."

The color of the bills of Starlings is a fair, but not certain key to the age and sex of Starlings. Possibly such a clue may act similiarly with Juncos. It would that Mr. Fuller is on the verge of an important discovery which will enable us all to know more about the birds we are banding. Will all banders handling this species note the color of the mandibles of these birds, particularly the browner appearing individuals and write Mr. Fuller. An adult male banded Nov. 6, '42 returned to "Ye Ed's" station Nov. 18, '43 had a solid dark upper mandible.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT!

Roy Wilcox of Speonk, L. I., N. Y. reports a Catbird visiting him daily on Nov. 6th. He also speaks of two others drowning in a rain barrel on his place this summer. One Catbird was banded by him six years ago..... Dick Fischer of Lindenhurst, L. I., N. Y. reports a Baltimore Oriole Nov. 3rd. Jesse V. Miller reports banding 2 Purple Finches, one a full grown male, banded Oct. 6th; ...first finches he has seen at Manhasset, L. I., N. Y. and first in 1,700 birds banded. R. T. Fuller of Winterton, N. Y. on Nov. 1st reports 4 Evening Grosbeaks, the first record in 11 years..... Howard Mahnken of Lamberville, N. J. writes: "While attending a Jersey Teachers' convention in New York I walked thru Central Park Zoo and stopped to look at the sea lions. A sign requested the public not to throw things into the pool as a sea lion died last March 8 with stones, keys, a flashlight bulb, and lo and behold a bird band in his "tummy". The band number was 36-720597. This was placed on a Black Duck caught "by hand" at "New York City" 1/18/39 by Donald Wylie now in the service.

1523 Donald Wylie
New York City
1/18/39



Dr. Dayton Stone
State Zoologist
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Sec. 562 P. L. & R.