

EBBA NUS

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

REACHING
OVER
375
BANDERS
EVERY MONTH

February, 1943

"LET US BAND TOGETHER"

Vol. 6, No. 2



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A BARRED OWL CAUGHT IN A BUTTERFLY NET

Continuing the series of stories relating seemingly incredible captures of wild birds for banding purposes, Ralph C. Preston of Lansdowne, Pa. informs us of the capture of a Barred Owl with a butterfly net on September 3, 1938. This event took place in the Adirondack Mts., near Lake Placid. Mr. Preston writes:

"Shortly after sunrise I discovered the owl perched on the roof of a chicken house. As I approached he flew off into the woods. I followed, and flushed him for a second time. This time he alighted on a stump. I approached to within 25 ft. when I got the ridiculous notion that I might try to capture him with a butterfly net. I returned to camp, procured two nets, and returned to the scene with some 20 people. A friend took one net and approached him from behind, and I with my net engineered a frontal attack. The owl turned his head at the approach from his rear, and at this moment I plunged forward and netted him as neatly as could be wished. He struggled in vain, but calmed down for the banding process. Upon his release he made straight for the depths of the forest. A number of observers had cameras, with the result that both movies and stills were produced of the capture and the banding".

TICKS ON JUNCOS

Mrs. Zora P. Jensen of Chapel Hill, N.C. reports the capture of 2 Slate-colored Juncos which were hosts to ticks. She writes: "One Junco had a large tick on the top of its head - so large it looked like a good size top-knot. I had noticed this Junco feeding endlessly. I removed the tick and saved the shell in case anyone wishes to examine it. This bird had evidently carried the tick for a long time, since the head was quite bare after the tick was removed.

"On January 22nd I caught another Junco with a smaller tick on the lower edge of the eye-lid. This had caused the eye to be quite deep-sunken -- one could hardly see the eye. I removed the tick and hope the Junco stays around long enough to see if the eye gets better. So far, the Junco is the only bird that I have banded which has been so "bedeviled".

LAST CALL FOR 1943 DUES

As is EBBA's usual custom, this issue will be the last one sent to those members who haven't paid their current dues. We are happy and pleased to announce that the great majority have attended to this little matter, but there are about a score we still have to hear from. Twenty members are important to us all and we dislike to lose even one. If you are one of our members who have put off writing to our treasurer and sending your annual dues, won't you do it today? His name and address are above.

ONE OF OUR MEMBERS SHOT DOWN IN GERMANY

Sergeant Observer William Lott of London, Ontario, killed in action while flying over Germany was buried at Cuxhaven, Hanover, Germany, according to notification received by his family on December 29th.

William Lott, who went overseas in March of last year, was reported missing in an air operations October 13th. Sergeant Lott will be remembered by many of us for his interesting contributions in former issues of EBBA NUS.

HAWKS AND DUCKS

It has been the contention of Stanley Grierson, of Katonah, N.Y., that when a Buteo Hawk is found with a pheasant, duck or other bird, that the bird was either sick, injured or dead before the hawk seized it. "On December 15th a female American Merganser was brought into the Trailside Museum at Bear Mt., by someone who had found a Red-tailed Hawk with it and had driven off the hawk.

"I decided to perform an autopsy on the duck," continues Mr. Grierson, "and found it had not only been shot in the wing, but that a large fish hook was lodged in its intestines. This had become very much inflamed. Evidently the duck had eaten a fish which had a hook lodged in it. I feel quite certain that this duck was either very sick or dead when the hawk began to feed upon it."

UNUSUAL RECORDS

Raymond T. Fuller of Winterton, N.Y. asks if any member can top this? "Two Mourning Doves on January 24, 1943, seen with binoculars in a field of corn shocks, partly encased in scale ice. Previous 8 days has not had an hour above freezing, temperatures ranging from 25 to 8 degrees. 1 mile from banding station. Elevation 700 ft. Ground nearly all icebound with the sleet which fell 8 days ago. Are there similar winter records for this species 80 miles northwest of Manhattan?"

Can't top it Mr. Fuller, but maybe some of our members have other unusual records. On December 6, 1942 Stanley Grierson saw a Great Blue Heron fishing with some Herring Gulls on the Hudson, near Peekskill.

MORE GULLS RECOVERED AT TAMPICO

Most of our members will recall that EBBA NUS reported the recovery of 4 Herring Gulls found in Tampico, Mexico in the spring of last year. Now it can be reported that 2 more of these birds have been recovered at the same Mexican city. The 4 birds reported before were all banded by members of the INLAND association and were comparatively young birds when captured at Tampico. These Herring Gulls differ in that they are much older birds. Both these Gulls were banded by Howard H. Krug of Chesley, Ontario on June 27, 1936 at Cavalier Island, Lake Huron (near Howdenvale, Ont.); the first one was killed January 18, 1938 by Francisco P. Juarez and the second one was killed February 8, 1939 by F. L. Isabell. Besides these two birds, Mr. Krug has also had another of his banded gulls recovered in Mexico.

Mr. Krug writes that during the past summer he made a Sokri Hawk Trap, (EBBA NUS, Vol. 3, No. 4) with which he thought he might catch some gulls at the lakeshore. The gulls cleaned up the bait to within 3 ft. of the trap and could not be coaxed nearer. Mr. Krug hopes to have better luck this summer, providing he can get the gas to get to the lakeshore occasionally.

SWIFT RECOVERIES IN GEORGIA

Raymond J. Fleetwood of Round Oak, Ga., while banding Chimney Swifts this autumn at Macon, Ga. trapped 12 birds wearing foreign bands. The data on these captures follows:

<u>Band No.</u>	<u>Date Banded</u>	<u>Place of Banding</u>	<u>Bander</u>	<u>Date Caught</u> 1942
36-73076	5/16/37	Kingston, Ontario	Ida Merriman	10/4
39-86227	9/11/38	Charlottesville, Va.	J. B. Calhoun	9/19
38-180140	10/4/38	Milledgeville, Ga.	Mabel T. Rogers	10/4
38-182853	10/1/40	Same	Same	10/24
38-86652	5/12/40	Kingston, Ontario	R. W. Smith	9/19
140-62580	5/12/40	Same	Same	10/24
40-58881	9/22/40	Memphis, Tenn.	B. B. Coffey	10/24
41-144300	8/26/41	Milledgeville, Ga.	Mabel T. Rogers	9/19
41-144039	8/26/41	Same	Same	9/19
41-44939	10/18/41	Memphis, Tenn.	B. B. Coffey	9/29
41-44140	Unknown	Unknown*	Unknown	9/29
40-823	Unknown	Unknown**	Unknown	9/19

* Probably banded by B.B.Coffey at Memphis, Tenn.(At present in the Army)

** Probably banded by Mrs. J. Y. Hutchinson at Clarksville, Tenn.

Mr. Fleetwood writes that the records above are the first ones that he has of Swifts banded at Memphis and recovered at his station, although he has taken Swifts banded at Baton Rouge by George Lowrey in previous seasons.

BANDING AT BELMONT, NEW YORK

Lawrence Howe of the above place writes that 1942 was a poor banding year at his station. He was only able to band 93 new birds; however he states that prospects are brighter for the coming year. During the first week of this year he captured a Black-capped Chickadee banded by him in the Spring of 1938 and believes that it must be at least 6 years old. This bird repeated several times during the first year but has evaded the traps in recent years.

A pair of Cardinals have again made their winter appearance at Mr. Howe's station, but up to January 8th he hadn't been able to discover whether either of them are ones he has banded before. They perch on his 8-cell Brenckle but refuse to enter.

During the past summer Mr. Howe was able to band a nestful of Marsh Hawks. A farmer ran across them while mowing hay and was kind enough to leave them and inform Mr. Howe. Despite the objections of the parent birds, kodachrome and black and white pictures were taken of them. Mr. Howe has one or two extra kodachromes of these birds and would be happy to trade with some other member for Kodachromes of some other bird.

NEWS FOR THE BANDERS

Herbert A. Houston of Wayne, Pa., trapped a White-throated Sparrow on Nov. 3, 1942 wearing band No. 40-12107. Can anyone inform him who banded it?

On Jan. 10th, B. S. Bowdish of Demarest, N.J. took 3 White-throats out of a trap. One was a new bird and the other 2 were returns. Considering the White-throat's record as a "non-returner", this is a pretty good double-header!

DOCK GETS ANOTHER HAWK

The attention of George Dock, Jr. of Scarsdale, N.Y., was called to an item in a metropolitan paper relating the "alleged" attack upon a street sweeper by a hawk during the Christmas holidays. According to the news-item, the hawk was finally caught and turned over to the S.P.C.A. Realizing that the S.P.C.A. had transportation difficulties just like every one else in the East, Mr. Dock guessed that the organization might be hard put to release the bird outside the city in its natural habitat.

After reading the item, the next morning Mr. Dock phoned the S.P.C.A. They told him that they had a "pigeon hawk". If he could get a release from the State Conservation Dept., they would turn over the hawk to him. In about an hour the necessary release was obtained, but by this time Mr. Dock began to wonder how he would take the bird home on the train. He decided to call the S.P.C.A. again. He inquired if they really had a Pigeon Hawk or a hawk partial to pigeons? Naturally the S.P.C.A. was not positive, but said he could call for it on the next day. Finally, Mr. Dock asked about its size. They checked and said the bird was about TWO AND ONE-HALF FEET LONG! When Dock hung up the phone he had visions taking home a Turkey Vulture or at least an Eagle on the train on the morrow.

Next day George Dock picked up the bird and it turned out to be an immature Red-shouldered Hawk. Released on January 3rd, at Scarsdale it is now wearing band No. 39-680981. The moral of this story is to watch the newspapers for opportunities of this kind.

"HOW'S THE WEATHER UP THAR?"

Speaking of news-items, one came to our attention reporting that an ice storm, centering around Cornwall, Ontario, was so severe that wild birds were frozen to death perched in the trees. 15 birds were reported as seen in one tree. The item was sent to Thomas Smith of Dundas, Ontario, to deny or confirm the report. Mr. Smith wrote back and said that Cornwall is 350 miles east of Dundas. "Here it was 20 below for 3 days in a row, while farther east (Cornwall, etc.) it was much lower. The Cornwall district suffered most of all, not alone from cold, but from ice, snow and sleet. They had the worst ice storm in their history with damage over a million dollars. Sole communication with the outside world was by train."

"I cannot vouch, at the present time, for the bird angle. It does sound far-fetched. I have never heard of it ever happening before, but I suppose if food was not available and the cold continued for any length of time, it would certainly go hard for the birds, and death would result; but frozen on a branch, that is another thing."

"If I can get anyone in Cornwall to substantiate the report, I will let you know. I enclose a clipping on the freezing of ducks, a danger always present with water birds." A condensed version of the clipping follows:

"On December 30, 1942, a Mallard was frozen to death on the ice-covered shore of Lake Ontario, near Brant Inn, Burlington, while another bird trapped in the ice was rescued just in time. A young man walking along the shore saw a duck flapping its wings and struggling to rise. He hurried over and found one duck dead and the other with its feet and breast feathers frozen in the ice. With the aid of an ice-pick, he carefully chopped the bird free and it soon hurried to open water where a flock of 25 Mallards was swimming about. The temperature was reported as being 24 below zero that morning."

ARTIFICIAL NESTS FOR CLIFF SWALLOWS

By Carleton A. Sturdevant, Prattsburg, N.Y.

(In the August issue of EBBA NUS (Vol. 5 No. 8), an item by Charles Spiker of Branchport, N.Y. referred to the writer's work with Cliff Swallows and the use of artificial nests. At the time "Ye Ed" hoped the membership would hear more about it. In this issue we are happy to announce that Mr. Sturdevant gives us the details.)

"The idea of the artificial nests came to me after watching Cliff Swallows try to build their nests from sandy loam. When they dried the nest cracked loose and fell down. I drove nails in the barn and the birds built around them. This did fairly well, but I felt it would be better if I made the nests for the birds out of wood fiber plaster.

"That Fall I took down several mud nests and made some measurements; size of entrance opening, depth of nest, diameter and shape of nest cavity. Then the fun or trouble started. I first tried to make a form with a core, with the idea of mixing the plaster to a batter and forcing it into the mould with an old auto pump. When I tried to take the mould or form apart it stuck. Try as hard and as carefully as I could the plaster nest would not come out of the form without breaking. I waxed the moulds but to no avail - it still stuck. I tried several other methods but got nowhere. Finally, I hit upon the idea of making the core (the part which makes the nest cavity and entrance opening) out of a sponge rubber. I used an old garden kneeling pad and a bath sponge. This did the trick. By covering this with a paper napkin I kept the plaster from going into the sponge rubber.

"I plastered this core all over with the aid of a putty knife for a trowel. I placed metal ears made from strap iron about 1 inch wide and a sixteenth thick in the sides up near the top to hold the nests up to the roof under the eaves. Best of all, it worked. I could get the rubber core out without cracking the plaster nest. When I had everything planned out, it took about 10 minutes to make a nest at a cost of about 3¢ for material per nest. I made 36 of these nests from one bag of wood fiber plaster. I could make 4 a day as it took 3 hours to harden the plaster so that I could get the core out. I got 27 of these nests up in time for the Swallows last spring. 20 nests were taken the first thing and 10 were used for second broods. During the season I banded 98 young swallows from these nests. I found the nests very handy to take down and get into and I hope to get more of them up for 1943. The birds built extensions on the entrances, sometimes as much as 2 inches in length."

Mr. Sturdevant says in closing his comments on the man-made nests, "All in all, I think it has been a very interesting and successful experiment and is another example of how birds are willing to cooperate with man, if proper protection and encouragement is offered." In offering our congratulations to Mr. Sturdevant it is believed that we will all echo his thought.

Mr. Sturdevant then continues his very interesting letter with the remark that his "first year of banding was not so good or too bad," -- and finishes by enclosing a list of 1,482 birds banded of 43 species. The echo is awestruck here and hopes that EBBA NUS will have room in the next issue for the wealth of data on the traps, bait and means he used to run up this substantial total.

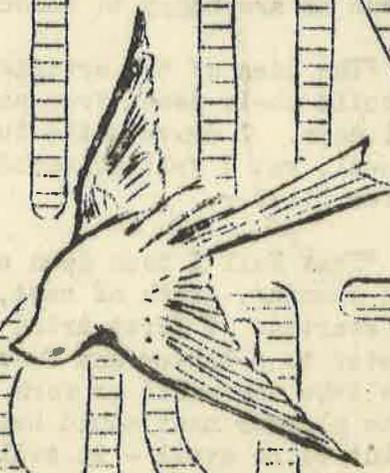
In the meantime, can any member give him full information on how to properly construct a Martin house. He would like to know the size of the entrance hole and the size of the nesting compartment for these birds. He would also like to procure a copy of Vol. II of Forbush's "Birds of Massachusetts & Other New England States." He has Vols. I and III.



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FRANK
MUS



Sec. 562 P. L. & R.



Report a dead bird wearing a band, when found, to
FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

