

## CORRESPONDENCE

## BIRD-BANDING SOCIETIES

EDITOR OF 'THE AUK':—Bird banding is a method of ornithological investigation of comparable importance to the study of birds in the bush, dead in the hand, or alive in cages. Each system of scientific study has its own particular opportunities, yields its own rewards. With each method, success comes through coöperation between students working on similar problems, learning what others have done by personal contact or by the reading of reports and published observations. Just as 'The Auk' is of great value to the members of the A.O.U., so are the banding publications of similar interest to the members of those organizations. Similarly, those who are banders could profit by the reports of the wider fields of ornithology, and all banders could profit by membership in the banding associations, each of which has its own publication of personal experiences, various investigations, helpful hints, designs of traps, and other comments and records.

There are approximately 1700 names on the list of bird-banding coöperators of the Fish and Wildlife Service, representing potential rather than active banders; of these about 325 are members of the A.O.U., about twenty per cent. The present total membership of the four banding associations is approximately 657, of whom 216, or thirty-three per cent, belong to the A.O.U. Also, only about one-third of the active banders have availed themselves of the opportunity of mutual gain by becoming members of the banding association which most closely covers their locality. Members of the A.O.U. appreciate the profit they derive from their membership, otherwise they would not belong; they accept their opportunities to coöperate in the development of the A.O.U., and they recognize their ability of increasing the value of 'The Auk' by submitting their own reports and observations for publication. There are many A.O.U. members actively interested in bird-banding research who could become affiliated with a banding association, and by their own efforts increase its usefulness and scientific publications. They undoubtedly would receive profit from the association with other banders, and help from their publications.

The bird banding associations and their officials with whom contact had best be made are as follows: NORTHEASTERN—Charles B. Floyd, Secretary-Treasurer, 210 South St., Boston, Mass.; EASTERN—Horace Groskin, Secretary, 210 Glenn Road, Ardmore, Pa., or Geoffrey Gill, Editor, 24 Overlook Drive, Huntington, Long Island, N. Y.; INLAND—Prof. O. A. Stevens, Secretary and Editor, State College Station, Fargo, N. D.; WESTERN—Mrs. N. Edward Ayer, Business Manager, 1300 Hillcrest Drive, Pomona, California, or Miss Mary M. Erickson, Editor, Santa Barbara State College, Santa Barbara, California.

The NEBBA relies upon the quarterly magazine, 'Bird-Banding' (James L. Peters, Editor)—Subscription \$2.50. The Eastern publishes a monthly, 'EBBA NUS'; the Western publishes a bi-monthly, 'News.' Both the EBBA and IBBA (mimeographed) publications coöperatively go to all members of both associations—annual dues \$1.00 in either association. The Western issues a quarterly mimeographed 'News from the Bird Banders.' Western membership dues are \$1.00, but with joint membership in the Cooper Ornithological Club, \$3.50, receiving the 'Condor.' 'Bird Banding' is in its 15th year, 'EBBA NUS' in its 6th, IBBA 'News' in its 16th, and WBBA 'News' in its 19th year, in 1944.

These organizations cover the United States and Canada. The NEBBA is principally in New England. The EBBA covers the region between the Northeastern and the Inland, with some overlapping. The IBBA extends from the longitude of eastern Ohio to the Rocky Mountains, and the WBBA beyond the Rockies.—HAROLD B. WOOD, President-pro tem, EBBA, Harrisburg, Pa.

'A PLEA FOR THE NAME 'BLUE GROUSE'

EDITOR OF 'THE AUK':—

The aim of the A.O.U. Check-List, namely, the perpetuation of established common names and the weeding out of local or but partially established names, as well as names causing confusion, is a most commendable one. In general, I think, the Check-List has been unusually successful in this work. But let me call your attention to a most serious inconsistency in the Check-List.

Although the Check-List has regularly changed its English names to fit the names which people actually use (as in the case of Snowflake vs. Snow Bunting), it actually is trying to perpetuate seven different common names for the bird which is called Blue Grouse by the people who live with it throughout the West. These seven are Dusky, Richardson's, Fleming's, Sooty, Sitka, Sierra, and Mount Pinos Grouse. They all refer to but one bird, which is separated at present into two taxonomic species: *Dendragapus obscurus* and *Dendragapus fuliginosus*.<sup>1</sup>

So far as I have been able to ascertain, no one uses the "book names" of the Check-List except writers unfamiliar with the bird but familiar with the Check-List, or writers who must conform to some editorial policy. I hope that the Check-List will be corrected soon in order to bring the book names of the members of *Dendragapus* into line with the facts of congruity. For subspecific reference, I would suggest that the names *Dusky*, *Richardson*, etc., be added to Blue Grouse to become *Dusky Blue Grouse*, *Richardson Blue Grouse*, *Sooty Blue Grouse*, etc. The fact that we are using the same common name for the root-name of two taxonomic species is immaterial. We already do so (e.g., Eastern Bobwhite and Masked Bobwhite) elsewhere. My own guess is that the birds are but one species of two species-groups rather than two species.

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<sup>1</sup> *D. fuliginosus* has now been united with *D. obscurus*. See the Nineteenth Supplement to the A.O.U. Check-list on page 445 of this issue.—Ed.