

## RETROSPECTIVE

With this number of the Bulletin the first little volume dealing with several phases of banding activities comes to a close. Those of us who have had charge of the office end of the work have endeavored to make the Bulletin helpful to banders by publishing some of the scientific results of their work and by calling attention to sundry matters of a mechanical and technical kind pertaining to operating banding stations.

A year's experience has revealed a gratifying cooperation between the banders and the editors, although this cooperation has not been as wide-spread as had been expected. In this connection the editors feel that a misapprehension exists in some banders' minds as to what is expected of them, and also that a feeling is present that perhaps the results of the work they are doing is of less importance than those secured at other stations. In this connection banders should remember that although they may not for the moment fully appreciate the complete meaning of all their observations and records, these records pretty surely contain matters of importance, justifying their study and analysis and sending the results to the editor. In this way a contact will be established that is very desirable for the editorial end, and one perhaps that will be profitable to the bander.

All operators should search their records for data having to do with the matter of "Returns," meaning by this the retaking of a bird at the station where it was banded after an absence, during which it is known to have migrated to its winter or summer quarters. Records of this sort mean much and banders are invited to send them in when they have been obtained in such quantity as to help confirm and extend our knowledge regarding any species. Single returns of a species require abundant confirmatory data before we can say they are not accidental. We need, also, testimony of this kind bearing on the *extent* of the habit of returning to the same nesting-ground year after year among birds in general; that is, does this habit extend to all species of migratory birds? Already it has been the privilege of bird-banders in this country, in particular during the last three or four years, to prove that the habit of birds of returning to the place of their birth, due to the homing instinct, is very wide-spread indeed, making it more and more probable that the practice is universal among migrating species. Within a year our members have obtained information that individual Yellow Warblers, Redstarts, and Indigo Buntings, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks,

Phœbes, etc., possess this habit. Among Song Sparrows, Catbirds, and Purple Finches there are numerous cases where birds have returned a second time, fifteen Purple Finches having done so at one station, showing in the case of this species that doing so is not a matter of accident.

The extent of remating among birds is another phase of banding work to which banders should give much attention, for results of importance have already been secured along this line. In occasional instances among Chipping Sparrows and Catbirds it has been shown that birds remain mated for at least two successive seasons. How wide-spread this practice is among birds remains to be determined. The homing instinct certainly tends to bring mated birds of one nesting-season to the same locality another season with the result that remating becomes easily possible.

The above two lines of investigation, namely (1) how nearly universal is the habit of "returning" among birds; and (2) to what extent do birds remate, are especially commended to our members.

C. L. W.

#### GENERAL NOTES

**Experiences in Banding Hummingbirds.**—During the past three years several Hummingbirds have been banded by Miss L. M. Brown and me at my cottage in Shelburne, Coös County, New Hampshire. Miss Brown, a nurse, who is a member of my home, has been especially interested and active in this work. The first occasion was on August 1, 1923, when Professor E. Emerton, who has a cottage not far from mine, appeared one day, saying, "Want to band a Hummingbird?" He had one entirely concealed in his hand, except for the bill. The bird, a female, was found buzzing like a bee on the window pane in his shed and was easily picked off. We took the smallest sized band, trimmed it as much as possible, and put it on 75193. The bird on being released shot off with its usual speed.

I thought at the time and still think that the band was too large, even when trimmed, but I was told from Washington that there wasn't enough demand for smaller bands to make it pay. The toes of the bird are very tender and soft. A repeat or a return is necessary to solve the question.

After that we constructed a small trap about a foot and a half each way of a simple frame of sticks covered with gauze, the front hinged. A table, just the height of the piazza railing on which it has been my custom for a few years to keep one or more tumblers of sweetened water, was set against the railing, and on this was the trap. The glass, which was put directly in front of the trap, was moved farther and farther in as the birds got used to it. Then the lid which was held up by hand, was closed, and the bird was caught. It was readily taken out by inserting the hand through a slit in the screened top.

In this way two females were caught and banded. They are 84712 August 29th, and 84718, August 31st, 1923.