

RECOVERIES OF BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERONS  
BANDED IN MASSACHUSETTS

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"PICNIC BANDING" has been strongly condemned recently, but the results obtained by the members of the Northeastern Bird Banding Association in their excursions to Barnstable and other rookeries of Night Herons, justify the means in this instance, we believe. This paper is, in a way, a vindication of "picnic banding," if the data collected herein are of any value to ornithologists.

We freely admit the general principle that bird-banding should ordinarily be limited to persons who are expert in bird identification and skilled in handling wild birds. However, banding young Night Herons in a colony which is restricted to this one species, requires little skill and less scientific knowledge, though it does call for enthusiasm and the courage of one's convictions to face the unpleasantnesses encountered during the invasion of a reeking rookery of fish-eating birds. It is very probable that the members of these expeditions would question the appropriateness of the word "picnic" as applied to their hours spent on the hot, mosquito-and-tick-infested, decidedly odoriferous confines of a thickly populated heronry. On such occasions one wears one's oldest clothes, overalls, a wide-brimmed slouch hat, a head-net, and heavy gloves. It requires considerable effort to reach the heronry in the first place across the shifting surface of the sand-dunes, and afterwards to scramble up the scrubby oaks and pitch pines in which the nests are located. And that is but part of the adventure.

Dr. Paul Bartsch, in his account of the first attempt at quantity banding of birds in this country, thus describes one feature which is unforgettable by those who have emulated his example in banding Night Herons. He says: "Young herons, though weak, have several methods of defense. When one climbs a tree in which the young have passed the second week, and the movements of climbing begin to shake it, he may be sure to receive a contribution of whitewash from the various members. If the climber persists, the birds will even

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<sup>1</sup>From a paper read before the American Ornithologists' Union, Charleston, S. C., Nov. 21, 1928.

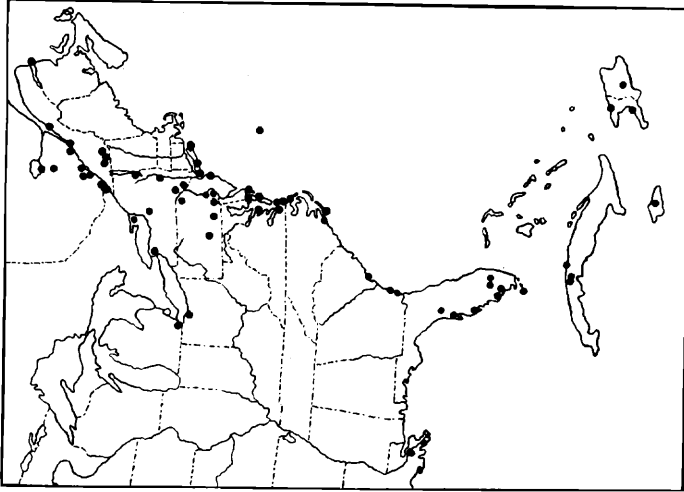
sacrifice their last meal in his favor, or rather disfavor, and a continuance of the climber's efforts will be met by the bird's final resort, which is to launch at the intruder with full force, spreading his wings and opening his cavernous mouth, striking with such violence that were he not securely anchored by his feet, he must surely be carried some distance beyond the nest."

In 1926 I published in the *Bulletin of the Northeastern Bird-Banding Association* a short account, with one map, of the recoveries of Black-crowned Night Herons, based on some seventy-five records from Barnstable birds. Since then I have been able to collect additional records for a total of one hundred and forty-four recoveries of herons banded in Massachusetts, and the resultant data seems worthy of notice. One hundred and ten recoveries are of birds banded in Barnstable County, twenty-nine of birds from Essex County, and five from Dukes County. The dates of banding range from May 28th to July 30th, but the largest numbers were banded about June 17th, which is a holiday near Boston.

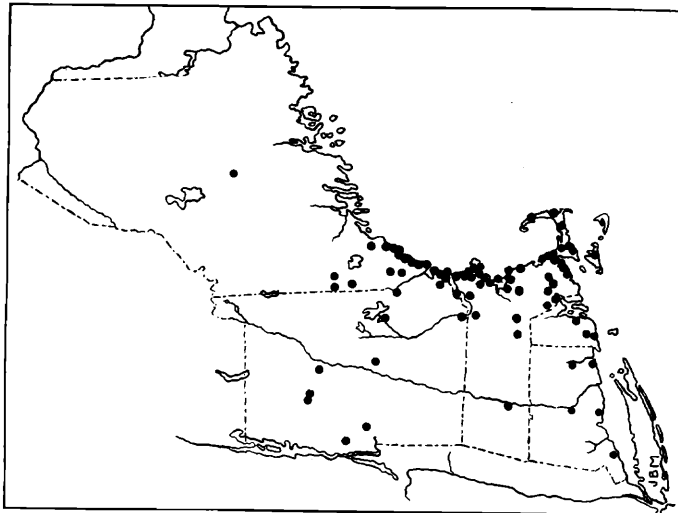
For convenience in showing the collected data, I have treated together, all recoveries of birds recorded during the first twelve months after banding, arranging them in chronological order by days of the month but disregarding the year of banding. The earliest date of recovery is that of a Barnstable bird recovered July 24th at Mashpee, an adjoining town only a few miles distant towards the southwest.

Thirty-two birds were recorded during the month of August in different years. On the 3d a bird was reported from Harrison, Maine, about 175 miles due north of the place of banding. (All distances are by "airline" and are approximate only.) By August 12th another Barnstable bird had reached Groton, Vermont, about 220 miles north-north-west, and on the 17th one from Ipswich had reached Valcourt, Quebec, about 240 miles in the same direction. Barnstable birds were reported on August 20th at Yardley, Pennsylvania, near the New Jersey line; on the 21st at Lewistown, Pennsylvania, 420 miles distant on the Juniata River above Harrisburg, and on the 22d at New Holland, Pennsylvania, between these two points. On the 26th a report came from Van Bruyssel, Quebec, over 500 miles almost due north and well beyond the St. Lawrence River.

The September map records thirty-one additional recoveries, but shows little change in the bird's dispersal-range. Twenty-one of these records are from points north of the place of banding, including six more records from Quebec. One report is from near Oswego, New York, about 480 miles nearly due west.



Outside of New England  
RECOVERIES OF BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERONS BANDED IN MASSACHUSETTS, 1909-1928



In New England

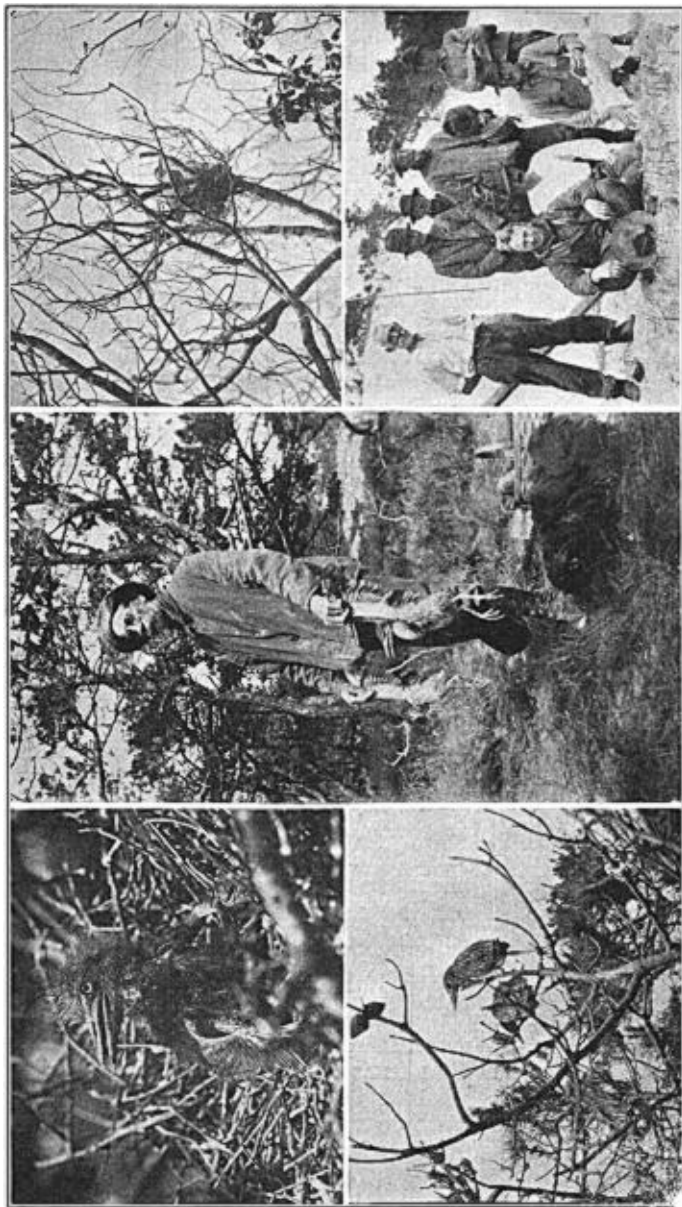
October's map, with its fifteen records, shows many birds still north of their birthplaces, but also carries us much farther south along the Atlantic seacoast, and we have recoveries on the 9th from White Oak River, North Carolina, 600 miles, and on the 14th from Brunswick, Georgia, 950 miles from home. One recovery of particular interest is that of an Ipswich bird picked up by a steamer about 250 miles east of Cape Henlopen, Delaware.

The map for November, while showing only ten recoveries, records the maximum dispersal, the reports coming from Lake St. John, Quebec, November 3d, a bird recently dead; Amherst Island, Ontario, November 1st; Erie Michigan, November 5th; Mathews, Louisiana, November 15th; Empire, Louisiana, November 19th; Key West, Florida, November 17th; and Hanover, Jamaica, about 1700 miles due south (exact date unknown).

December, January and February records may be grouped together as indicating the winter range of the bird, and we find a wide and rather interesting distribution of these Massachusetts Night Herons. The farthest north reported was from beyond the St. Lawrence River in Quebec, January 15th, but as this was a bird which was picked up dead and we have no definite information as to how long it may have been dead, it probably should be disregarded. The next most northerly record is a bird recovered at Hingham, Massachusetts, only about forty miles from the place of banding. This bird was seen, alive and apparently normal, by members of my own family, on February 10th, and was picked up dead February 12th after a very severe storm. Other Massachusetts winter records are Vineyard Haven, January 24th, and Wareham, January 31st. The distribution map also shows recoveries from Rhode Island, New York, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida, with three from the island of Cuba, all birds in their first winter.

There are very few records of first-year birds after the northward migration has started, and these are not instructive, as we cannot know whether the birds recovered had ever been farther from home than the place of recovery.

Thirty-two recoveries have been reported more than twelve months after the date of banding. These add little, however, to our knowledge of the distribution of the bird. New Jersey, Maryland and Ohio are added to the States visited by Massachusetts Night Herons and we also have reports from Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The chief interest in the late recoveries of these fully adult birds lies in the information



ADULT HERON ON NEST  
"PICNIC BANDERS"

"THE GRAND OLD MAN"  
EDWARD HOWE FORBUSH

NESTLING NIGHT HERON  
YOUNG HERONS CLIMBING

Photographs by E. H. Forbush and A. W. Taylor

they give as to whether or not these birds return to their birthplace to breed, and the age to which they may attain.

As Night Heron's eggs are found in Massachusetts as early as April 15th and some young birds remain in the nests until July 15th or later, these dates may be considered as indicating approximately the period during which adult birds should be found near their nesting-places. We have thirteen recoveries between April 7th and July 8th, eight of which are located within forty miles, and five of these within fifteen miles, of the place of banding. (No attempt has been made either to trap adult herons, or to find banded adults by "collecting" them at the breeding rookeries.) A bird at Lockport, N. Y., April 7th, may have been still *en route* to its breeding-place. On July 15th a two-year-old bird, banded at Bourne on Cape Cod, was reported from Shippigan, New Brunswick, but the most interesting record during the breeding-season is that of a Barnstable bird which was shot on May 6th at Anse-à-veau, Haiti, when practically three years old. The oldest bird at the time of recovery was Dr. Phillips' Essex County heron, which lacked just two weeks of seven years from the date of banding.

Our last map is a compilation of all the data and shows a total of one hundred and forty-four recoveries of Black-crowned Night Herons banded in Massachusetts, and probably gives a pretty complete picture of the range of our Massachusetts-bred birds. This range as shown is from Shippigan Island in the extreme northeast corner of New Brunswick; Lake St. John, Quebec; Amherst Island, Ontario; Sandusky Bay, Ohio; and Erie, Michigan; to near the delta of the Mississippi in Louisiana; Key West, Florida; Cuba, Jamaica, Haiti, and San Domingo in the West Indies. Particularly interesting to me are the recoveries along the St. Lawrence River and Lakes Ontario and Erie, suggesting as they do the possibility that some of the young Night Herons, soon after leaving the nest, may travel directly north to the St. Lawrence River and beyond, then, as cold weather threatens, change their course, following up the great river and along the two lakes, perhaps crossing to the Ohio Valley *via* the Sandusky and Miami Rivers, and down the Ohio and Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico. Unfortunately for this hypothetical "fly-line," however, we have no records of recoveries in the Central States between Lake Erie and near the mouth of the Mississippi in Louisiana.

I take this opportunity to correct an error in my earlier article on Night Heron Recoveries, in the *Bulletin* for April,

1926. In describing the earliest banding at the Barnstable colony, I inadvertently credited this to Dr. Leon J. Cole, who reported it in *The Auk*. The actual banding was done by Alfred C. Redfield and Leonard W. Pearson, two members of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club.

A table giving the recoveries in detail follows:

JULY RECOVERIES		
<i>Date</i>	<i>Place Banded</i>	<i>Place Recovered</i>
24	Barnstable	Mashpee, Mass.
AUGUST RECOVERIES		
3	Barnstable	Harrison, Me.
5	"	Plymouth, Mass.
6	"	Plymouth, Mass.
7	"	Kennebunkport, Me.
8	"	Sandwich, Mass.
10	"	Groton, Vt.
12	Chatham	Farnumsville, Mass.
16	Chilwark	Kittery, Me.
17	Ipswich	Valcourt, Que.
17	Barnstable	Rehoboth, Mass.
17	"	East Deering, Me.
18	"	Minot, Mass.
20	Chatham	Rock, Mass.
20	Barnstable	Fryeburg, Me.
20	"	Yardley, Pa.
21	"	York, Me.
21	"	Lewistown, Pa.
21	Ipswich	Enfield, N. H.
22	Barnstable	Albany, N. Y.
22	"	New Holland, Pa.
23	Ipswich	North Chelmsford, Mass.
23	"	Milton, N. H.
26	"	Montpelier, Vt.
26	Barnstable	Van Bruyssel, Que.
27	"	Dennis, Mass.
27	"	Holliston, Mass.
27	"	Napanoch, N. Y.
28	Ipswich	Salem, Mass.
29	Barnstable	Berkeley, Mass.
29	"	Newburyport, Mass.
31	"	Montpelier, Vt.
—	"	Wellfleet, Mass.
SEPTEMBER RECOVERIES		
1	Bourne	Mattapoisett, Mass.
1	Barnstable	Laconia, N. H.
1	"	St. Joseph Lake, Que.
2	"	Sutton Junction, Que.
2	"	Iberville, Que.
3	Ipswich	Magnolia, Mass.
4	"	Exeter, N. H.
4	Wellfleet	Lake St. Peter, Que.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Place Banded</i>	<i>Place Recovered</i>
4	Barnstable	East Orleans, Mass.
4	"	Beach Bluff, Mass.
9	"	Quebec, Que.
11	"	Cape Porpoise, Me.
12	Ipswich	Essex, Mass.
12	Barnstable	Mashpee, Mass.
14	"	Ipswich, Mass.
14	"	Seabrook, N. H.
16	"	Proctor, Vt.
16	"	St. Justin, Que.
17	"	Seabrook, N. H.
17	Squibnocket	Fall River, Mass.
18	Wenham	Seabrook, N. H.
18	Barnstable	North Franklin, Conn.
20	Ipswich	Brockton, Mass.
21	"	Dover-Foxcroft, Me.
24	Barnstable	Ticonderoga, N. Y.
25	Ipswich	North Andover, Mass.
26	Squibnocket	Susquehanna Co., Pa.
26	Barnstable	Springvale, Me.
27	"	Lake Neatahwanta, N. Y.
28	"	East Brownfield, Me.
30	"	Rowley, Mass.

## OCTOBER RECOVERIES

3	Barnstable	Nashua, N. H.
7	Ipswich	Scarboro, Me.
9	Buzzards Bay	Exton, Pa.
9	Barnstable	Cape Porpoise, Me.
9	"	White Oak River, N. C.
10	"	Monroe, N. Y.
13	"	Hampton, N. H.
14	"	Brunswick, Ga.
15	"	Allen's Harbor, R. I.
15	Ipswich	Boston Harbor, Mass.
21	Squibnocket	Montreal, Que.
24	Barnstable	Kennebunk, Me.
25	Ipswich	250 miles off Cape Henlopen, Del.
26	Bourne	Stony Creek, Conn.
28	Barnstable	Niantic, Conn.

## NOVEMBER RECOVERIES

1	Barnstable	Amherst Island, Ont.
2	Wenham	Masonville Station, Que.
3	Barnstable	Lake St. John, Que.
5	"	Erie, Mich.
15	"	Mathews, La.
17	"	Key West, Fla.
19	"	Empire, La.
24	Bourne	Lindenhurst, L. I., N. Y.
29	Barnstable	Moore Haven, Fla.
30	"	Inverness, Fla.
—	"	Hanover, Jamaica, B. W. I.



<i>Date</i>	<i>Place Banded</i>	<i>Place Recovered</i>
DECEMBER RECOVERIES		
10	Barnstable	Valona, Ga.
25	"	Lee Co., Fla.
JANUARY RECOVERIES		
1	Squibnocket	Charlestown, R. I.
5	North Beverly	Norfolk, Va.
7	Barnstable	Back Bay, Va.
12	Ipswich	Clewistown, Fla.
13	Barnstable	Back Bay, Va.
15	"	Berthierville, Que.
21	"	Brooklyn, N. Y.
24	"	Vineyard Haven, Mass.
27	Ipswich	Chincoteague, Va.
28	North Beverly	Sagua River, Cuba
31	Barnstable	Wareham, Mass.
—	"	St. Helena Island, S. C.
FEBRUARY RECOVERIES		
3	Barnstable	Currituck Sound, N. C.
8	"	Guarieras, Matanzas, Cuba
8	Bourne	Guarieras, Matanzas, Cuba
12	Barnstable	Hingham, Mass.
12	Ipswich	Diggs, Va.
MARCH RECOVERIES		
20	Barnstable	Westport, Conn.
APRIL RECOVERIES		
1	Barnstable	Quincy, Mass.
MAY RECOVERIES		
31	Ipswich	Ipswich, Mass.
RECOVERED BETWEEN ONE AND TWO YEARS AFTER BANDING		
July 8	Barnstable	Marshfield, Mass.
Aug. 5	"	Manchester, Mass.
Sept. 8	"	Haverhill, Mass.
Sept. 16	"	East Shoreham, Vt.
Oct. 12	Ipswich	Port de Paix, Haiti
Nov. 5	Barnstable	West Conshohocken, Pa.
Dec. 25	Ipswich	Spring Lake, N. J.
Jan. 9	Barnstable	Ozona, Fla.
Jan. 14	Bourne	Everglades, Henry County, Fla.
Jan. 17	Barnstable	Plymouth, Mass.
May 5	"	Dighton, Mass.
June 15	Bourne	South Wareham, Mass.
RECOVERED BETWEEN TWO AND THREE YEARS AFTER BANDING		
July 15	Bourne	Shippigan, N. B.
Aug. 10	Barnstable	Isle Verte, Temiscouata Co., Que.
"Fall"	"	Cape Porpoise, Me.
"Fall"	Buzzards Bay	Carolina, R. I.
Nov. 15	Barnstable	Cape Lookout, N. C.
Jan. 8	Bourne	Salisbury, Md.
May 6	Barnstable	Anse á Veau, Haiti

<i>Date</i>	<i>Place Banded</i>	<i>Place Recovered</i>
RECOVERED BETWEEN THREE AND FOUR YEARS AFTER BANDING		
Nov. 5	Barnstable	Constanza, Dominican Republic
Jan. 29	Ipswich	Gasparilla, Fla.
April 7	Barnstable	Lockport, N. Y.
May 14	"	Novac, L. I., N. Y.
May 14	Buzzards Bay	East Wareham, Mass.
June 1	Barnstable	Buzzards Bay, Mass.
June 2	"	Sanford, Me.
RECOVERED BETWEEN FOUR AND FIVE YEARS AFTER BANDING		
Aug. 12	Barnstable	Ocean City, Md.
May 1	Hamilton	North Cromwell, Conn.
July 25	Barnstable	Easthampton, Mass.
Oct. 24	"	Sandusky Bay, Ohio
RECOVERED BETWEEN FIVE AND SIX YEARS AFTER BANDING		
June 4	Hamilton	Rye Beach, N. H.
RECOVERED BETWEEN SIX AND SEVEN YEARS AFTER BANDING		
May 16	North Beverly	Peabody, Mass.
Cohasset, Massachusetts.		

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## THE ROLE OF THE AMATEUR

BY LUDLOW GRISCOM

ONE hears a good deal nowadays of phrases such as "professional scientists" *versus* "amateurs," or "ornithologists" *versus* "amateur bird-students," and there seems to be a very general impression that the former in some subtle manner are superior and that the latter, often in a somewhat less subtle manner, are relatively inferior. We live in an age where one popular idea after another is being "debunked," so it is perhaps timely in this connection to replace artificial and often misleading distinctions and terms with what would seem to me to be a sounder viewpoint. I am personally interested in the question, as it has been my happy fortune to be in close contact with "amateurs" in both botany and ornithology, and I am convinced that this association has been of far greater benefit to me than to the great majority, at least, of them. While, therefore, I am quite incompetent to write on a strictly bird-banding theme, I can promote discussion of a broader theme which applies to bird-banding, and which has been touched upon in a recent number of this journal.

If we adhere strictly to the dictionary definition, the only