

GENERAL NOTES

An Early Successful Bird-Banding Venture in England.—In a footnote, apparently by the Rev. Richard Polwhele, to a book published in 1796 entitled "Essays, by a Society of Gentlemen, at Exeter", (London, n.d., p. 135) the following is recorded: "The late Lord Orford (we are told) once loosed a heron, and set his hawks after it. The contest between the heron and the hawks was long and full of sport; when, at length, the hawks were victorious, and brought the heron to the ground. The heron, however, was not hurt. And in gratitude for the diversion which this bird had afforded his Lordship, he ordered a gold ring to be made, with *L. Orford* and the date of the year engraven upon it, and put it about the heron's leg, and gave him his liberty. About ten years after, Lord Orford received a letter, inclosing the above ring, from the Imperial ambassador, who informed his Lordship, that the Emperor had taken the enclosed ring from the leg of a heron which his hawks had killed; and seeing *E. Orford* upon the ring, and observing the date, had sent it to the Earl by his ambassador, as a great curiosity. The ring was much bruised and discoloured, but the inscription perfect. This incident hath a romantic air; and, for a moment, we can scarcely regard the event as fortuitous."

George Walpole, third Earl of Orford, who banded this heron, and had the satisfaction of learning ten years later that it had been recovered by no less a personage than the Emperor, was a grandson of the great Sir Robert Walpole, who had been head of the British Government for over twenty years, and nephew of the author and collector Horace Walpole. He succeeded to the family titles in March, 1751, and died early in December, 1791. Let me hasten to add that he was not a student of ornithology, but merely an eccentric and a sportsman.

I have tried unsuccessfully to establish the exact date and place of this banding operation; it cannot, obviously, have been later than 1781, but I believe it was later than 1773. Lord Orford was insane from February to December of that year (see Horace Walpole's *Letters*, edited by Mrs. Paget Toynbee, VIII, 239-397), and on recovering his senses was eager for wine, horses, and dogs: from which I infer that he had not yet become interested in reviving the ancient sport of hawking (cp. Walpole's *Letters*, XV, 121, and F. H. Salvin and William Brodrick, *Falconry in the British Isles*, 2d edition, 1873, p. 5). He was again insane from early April, 1777, till late March, 1778 (*H. W. Lett.*, X, 41-213), and again for some three weeks before his death (*ibid.*, XV, 88, 90, 93, 104); during these periods he was alternately raving and extremely depressed, much of the time unconscious. As to the place, it may have been his estate of Houghton, near King's Lynn, Norfolk, but since he built a shelter for his hawking-parties about two miles East of Newmarket, on the Suffolk-Cambridgeshire border (Salvin and Brodrick, *op. cit.*, 78n), he may have taken the heron in that vicinity.

The Emperor who recovered Orford's bird was probably one of Marie Antoinette's brothers, Joseph II (crowned 1765) and Leopold II (crowned 1790); it may possibly have been their father, Francis I, who had been entertained before his coronation (1745) by Sir Robert Walpole at Houghton. The recovery presumably took place somewhere in the Habsburg domains: Belgium, Tyrol, Austria, Hungary, Bohemia, or Milan.

It may seem strange to banders that a heron should put up a fight against a hawk; but the "fight" is merely a matter of evasion. When the hawks take wing the heron is already high in the air; all the birds start climbing in spirals as fast and as steeply as they can, and when the hawks have got well above the heron they "stoop", or dive at it, one after another, the heron doing its best each time to dodge. The

contesting birds are meanwhile progressing across country, with the hunters—the human ones—riding along to watch them. The higher the birds climb, the better the sport is accounted to be; and the game may travel several miles as fast as the sportsmen can gallop, before the prey is brought to ground. According to the authors of "Falconry in the British Isles", from whom I take this information, it is customary to set free any heron not too badly injured or needed for training young hawks, and to mark captured herons before liberating them with a copper band bearing one's name and the date. One heron, captured in 1844, bore such a band dated fifteen years earlier. (*Op. cit.*, 78-81).

Lord Orford's heron was probably *Ardea cinerea cinerea*, since Lord Lilford speaks of that species as the "common heron" (*Lord Lilford on Birds*, London, 1903, p. 274). Horace Walpole's published correspondence does not seem to mention the episode, perhaps because George was estranged from his uncles by 1745 and never gave them his confidence; I do not know of any more likely source of information.

It is interesting to know that our Earl's eccentricity also led him to domesticate three stags of the red deer, which he harnessed instead of horses to his phaeton. All went well, until one day a pack of staghounds caught his scent, whereupon stags, coach, coachman, and His Lordship had to take refuge in a barn while the hounds bayed at the door.—
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Notes on Osprey Migration and Mortality.—The writer has had a theory for some time that immature Ospreys (*Pandion Fralicaëtus carolinensis*), banded on the Atlantic Coast, migrate southward the *first time* by an *inland* route, rather than along the coast as one would generally suppose. This assumption is based on three recoveries I have received of Ospreys banded at Avalon, New Jersey, as follows: 387682, banded August 15, 1926, shot on September 25, 1926, at Dorothy, West Virginia; 237482, banded June 26, 1927, shot on September 29, 1927, at Upper Tract, West Virginia; and 303403, banded July 1, 1928, shot at Kunkletown, Pennsylvania, on September 5, 1928. A700307 and A700308, mentioned above, lend strength to this theory, both being recovered at inland points (Rosman is situated in the extreme western corner of North Carolina). I also recall a recovery secured by Mr. John T. Emlen, Jr., of an Osprey banded at Avalon, which was killed in Virginia (details lacking). I do not know of any recoveries of immature Ospreys, banded on the Atlantic Coast, which have been secured during their *initial* southward migration in coastal regions.

The fact that the mortality among our Raptore (protected species) is very high, on account of man's relentless warfare through his agencies, the gun and the trap, is evidenced by the following data, furnished through the kindness of Mr. C. Brooke Worth: On August 10, 1929, Mr. Worth banded five fledgling Ospreys in the nest, at Avalon, New Jersey. Four, or eighty per cent, have been heard from as follows: A700305 found at Avalon, September 7, 1929, having flown into the side of a cottage and suffered a broken wing, dying shortly afterward; A700306, shot at Avalon, September 2, 1929, out of the nest but a short time; A700307, found dead on West Virginia University campus in June, 1930, Morgantown, West Virginia, evidently shot; A700308, found with a broken wing (probably shot) at Rosman, North Carolina, September 18, 1929, and released. On January 2, 1932, this bird was caught in a padded steel trap at Rockledge, Florida. The bird surely bears a *charmed* life, for it was again released "*not hurt in the least*" (according to the trapper)—"he