

OUR NEW COVER PICTURE

The well-known bird artist, Mr. Frank W. Benson, the distinguished painter and etcher whose work on birds, and especially on waterfowl, has made for him an international reputation, has most generously presented to the Northeastern Bird-Banding Association a drawing of singular interest to most of its members. It shows a wind-blown bit of sand-dune coast with a Common Tern dropping down to its nest, the wings characteristically raised. To many of our members this will bring vividly back to memory arduous days of banding in tern colonies. It may be that more Common Terns have been banded by our group than any other single species of bird. Those of us who have had the privilege of visiting the sandy parts of our New England shores will especially welcome this picture, which we reproduce upon our cover in this issue, as a symbol of at least part of our activities, as a vivid reminder of the beauties of such regions, and as an artistic reproduction of one of our most graceful birds in action. The Council of the Association is sure that the members will join with it in thanking Mr. Benson for this gracious expression of his interest in our work.

FREDERICK A. SAUNDERS, *President*
Northeastern Bird-Banding Association.

LIFE HISTORIES OF NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS

We commend to the attention of the readers of BIRD BANDING the following letter from the author of that very important work "Life Histories of North American Birds," of which nine volumes have thus far been published by the Smithsonian Institution in Washington.

To our Contributors:

So many inquiries have come to the author as to when the next volume of "Life Histories" is likely to appear that it seems desirable to explain to former contributors the present status of the work.

Since Bulletin 162 on Gallinaceous Birds was published, the manuscripts for two volumes on Birds of Prey have been prepared, covering all the birds from the vultures to the owls inclusive in the order of the old Check-List. These volumes have not been published for lack of the necessary money, drastic economies in the regular governmental appropriations having required the elimination of such funds. While there is no immediate prospect of their publication, it is our hope that one at least may appear next year.

In the meantime, the author is at work on still another volume, the twelfth, which will cover all the birds in the old Check-List arrangement from the parrots to the hummingbirds inclusive.

Although some material has already come in on some of these groups, the author realizes that former contributors have not been advised as to what groups would be taken up next, so that they have not sent in as much material as they might have done.

The author is ready now to receive contributions of notes on habits, and photographs, relating to any birds in the groups indicated above. Notes relating merely to distribution or migration should be sent to the Biological Survey, where this part of the work is handled.

The assistance of our many contributors in the preparation of earlier volumes has been invaluable, and I ask that it be continued. Those who send in material suitable for use in the work will have their names placed on the mailing-list to receive future volumes.—ARTHUR CLEVELAND BENT, Taunton, Massachusetts.

A letter from William J. Lyon to Ira N. Gabrielson, Chief U. S. Bureau of Biological Survey, Proposing a Change in the Inscription on Bird Bands

Ira N. Gabrielson, Chief,
U. S. Biological Survey,
Dept. of Agriculture,
Washington, D. C.
Dear Sir:

It is my conviction that a much increased number of reported returns and recoveries would result from a change in the marking of the bands used by bird-banders under Federal permit.

Some years ago Dr. A. R. Shearer, of Mont Belvieu, Texas, wrote about the trouble he had had in securing the bands from birds killed for food by colored people and Mexicans. Even when he knew that a bird with a band had been taken, he found that the hunter's fear of prosecution for illegal killing prevented the delivering-up of the bands. He could get bands at last only by visiting these people frequently and obtaining their confidence.

Apparently "U. S. Biological Survey" means nothing to many hunters, and to the illegal killer, it suggests Federal prosecution. Hence I propose that, in the interest of securing the largest number of returns from the birds that are killed, the bands be stamped "Notify Box Z, Washington, D. C.," or in some similar manner.

Yours very truly,
WILLIAM I. LYON,
Inland Bird-Banding Association.

November 30, 1935.

RECENT LITERATURE

(Reviews by Margaret Morse Nice)

The articles have been selected and arranged under subjects of importance to students of the living bird and also for the purpose of suggesting problems or aspects of problems to those banders who wish to make the most of their unique opportunities.

Headings in quotation marks are the exact titles of books or articles or literal translations of such titles. Other headings refer to general subjects or are abbreviated from titles in foreign languages. References to periodicals are given in italics.

BANDING AND MIGRATION STUDIES

Banding in Switzerland.¹ A. Schifferli, Jr., reports 20,681 birds banded in 1933, of which 7 species of Titmice totaled 7202, Starlings 3719, and Swallows (*Hirundo rustica*) 1140. The arrangement of data is excellent, for one can see at a glance the age of the bird when banded and recovered and the distance and direction of the place of recovery from that of banding. Many examples are given of young returning to their birthplaces. A few distant recoveries are reported for Blue Titmice (*Parus cæruleus*), 860 kilometers southwest, and Coal Titmice (*Parus ater*), 195 kilometers south. A Swallow reached the age of seven years, as did a Common Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*). Two Alpine Swifts (*Micropus m. melba*) banded as nestlings were found nesting in their birthplace eight years later.