

REDSTART. *Setophaga ruticilla*  
Banded, 2527. Returns, 20

B86035, banded at Groton, Mass., on May 18, 1929, by William P. Wharton, was retrapped at station of banding on May 11, 1932, also May 17, 1933.

C13865, banded at Wolfville, Nova Scotia, on July 12, 1929, by Ronald W. Smith, was retrapped at station of banding on June 30, 1930, also on June 25, 1931.

In the preparation of these papers, the author desires to acknowledge his indebtedness to Miss May T. Cooke of the Biological Survey, who has personally examined thousands of cards for the purpose of selecting the cases desirable for presentation.

Biological Survey, Washington, D. C.

---

GENERAL NOTES

**Homing Experiments with Golden-crowned Sparrows.**—I have read with interest that portion of the reviews in the January (1936) issue of *Bird-Banding* having the sub-heading, "Homing Experiments."

This article gives as the longest winter return known, that of a Gambel Sparrow released at a distance of 34 miles from where trapped. (E. L. Sumner, Jr., and J. L. Cobb, *Condor* 30:317-319.)

I have a record of a winter return from a distance of 84 miles by a Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia coronata*) in November, 1933. Of course, November is not usually considered a winter month, but as these sparrows breed in Alaska and British Columbia (never, so far as is known, in California) I think we may call the following a winter return. I quote as follows from my record book:

"Twenty-eight Golden-crowned Sparrows were trapped at the University of California Botanical Gardens, Strawberry Canyon, near Berkeley, California, on November 7, 8, 9, 1933; kept in small cages in the Life Sciences Building on the university campus until the morning of November 10th. Miss Mary M. Erickson of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology and I then placed the twenty-eight birds in paper cartons covered with mosquito netting, and drove in my car to a point on the North Fork of the Calaveras River, in Calaveras County, California, about two miles south of San Andreas. This is at an elevation of about 1,000 feet and is about 84 miles a little north of east from Berkeley. At this place Miss Erickson and I released the birds which immediately flew across the river to trees on the opposite bank. There are grass-covered hills on each side of the river, dotted with oaks and pines. In the river bottom are willows, and, near by, sycamores and other trees. We left Berkeley at 8.30 A.M., and released the birds the same day at 1 P.M." Here follows a list of the results of interest:

The records show that one of these Golden-crowned Sparrows, C102090, was recaptured by me on November 27th, seventeen days later, close to where it was first trapped. The same bird repeated in the same location several times during the next few months. This record is interesting because the bird presumably flew across north and south migration routes to its chosen wintering ground. I recaptured three more of these twenty-eight Golden-crowned Sparrows at the Botanical Gardens in September and October, 1934, after which time I ceased banding in Strawberry Canyon.—E. L. SUMNER, Menlo Park, California.

**The Homing Instinct of Song Sparrows.**<sup>1</sup>—Although much is known of the migratory habits of many birds, and the tendency of some species to return to the same haunts year after year is familiar, yet we are still very ignorant of the mechanism of this ability, or indeed, of the degree to which given species possess it. During the past two years the author has carried on banding operations on a

---

<sup>1</sup> From the Department of Zoology, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York.

small scale in connection with a study of the blood parasites of birds (particularly the malarias), and it was observed that Song Sparrows (*Melospiza melodia melodia*) were not only caught repeatedly, but that they always returned to the particular location where the original capture was made (Manwell and Herman, *Bird-Banding*, 6:133-134). This was true even when other traps were in the line of flight, and the fact that the birds were always carried in closed containers made no difference with their ability to find their way back. This fact led the author to try liberating the birds at various points some distance from the city, and it was found that although they were always carried in closed containers, and were in several instances liberated at dusk when it was nearly dark, some of them were nevertheless able to find their way back to the point of original capture. The points at which the birds were released ranged from a mile and a half from the point of capture to thirty-five miles, and in several instances the same bird was liberated several times at different points and at different distances—sometimes in one direction from the city and sometimes in another. A summary follows:

Of a total number of thirty-two Song Sparrows captured during the spring of 1936 and liberated at Lyman Hall, Syracuse University, twelve were recaptured once, one three times, one six times, and one seven times. Four had been originally captured at the same location the previous year, and the bird (34-140217) which was recaptured six times this year had been captured five times in 1935. The bird (34-140209) which was recaptured seven times during the present year had been trapped eight times the previous spring. Three birds (34-140217, 34-140253, 34-140275) were liberated at a point nine miles east of the city and were recaptured two, three and twenty-one days later respectively at the point where they were originally taken (which is about one and a half miles from the University). These same birds had been on numerous other occasions liberated at the University. Another bird was liberated about two miles south of the city and was recaptured twelve hours later at the point where it was caught to begin with. One of the three birds just referred to (34-140217) was subsequently caught and taken to Chittenango, a village about fifteen miles east of Syracuse. After liberation there, it returned and was caught again at the original point of capture thirty-six hours later. It was then taken to Cortland, a city about thirty-five miles south of Syracuse, and released. It was again recaptured six days later. These experiments, though not carried out on many birds, show very definitely that Song Sparrows possess a strong homing instinct, and that the ability to return home cannot depend on a memory of things seen. Since some birds were caught many times and frequently, others a few times and more rarely, and still others only once (one was captured once in the spring of 1935 and once this spring) it is clear that this sense of locality varies greatly in different birds, and it is probable that some tend to range more widely than others.—REGINALD D. MANWELL.

**An Eastern Chipping Sparrow at Least Eight and One-half Years Old at Summerville, South Carolina.**—Eastern Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella p. passerina*) B37036, which was banded by me on March 27, 1928, at Summerville, was taken by me as a return for the fourth time on March 3, 1936. This bird was not taken in the winters of 1929, 1930, 1934, and 1935, and so can be called only a Return-4W. Its age, however, is evidently at least eight and one-half years, which is two years older than any other Chipping Sparrow I have taken. The bird appeared to be in good condition, and had no indication of having suffered from the foot disease which so often maims this species.—WILLIAM P. WHARTON, Groton, Massachusetts.

**A Black-capped Chickadee Victimized by the Eastern Cowbird.**—Dr. Herbert Friedmann reports a single case of the victimizing of the Black-capped Chickadee (*Penthestes a. atricapillus*) by the Eastern Cowbird (*Molothrus a. ater*) in his book "The Cowbirds" (1927), and points out that the specific identity of the Chickadee of that record is open to question.