

For the benefit of those who are unfamiliar with the plumage changes of the Herring Gull, the most reliable field marks (based on Dwight's *Gulls of the World*) are as follows:

- (1) First year birds (brown birds): wing tips are solidly brown; tail feathers definitely brown throughout.
- (2) Second year: tail shows a definite paling at the base. (Wing tips still solid brown; rest of bird may be paler and show considerable white on underparts.)
- (3) Third year (almost adult): tail almost entirely white, with a dull black band toward the tip; primaries black, may show mirrors or white spots on each wing. (Only a single mirror to each primary feather.)
- (4) Fourth year (adult): tail entirely white; the first and second primaries show two mirrors on each feather.

Many Gulls in second-year plumage, wearing bands placed on them in 1937, are now to be seen along our coasts. Careful plumage notes on these birds will be appreciated by the committee and may be forwarded to "Gull Survey" at the American Museum of Natural History, New York, N. Y., or at the New England Museum of Natural History, Boston, Mass.

Linnaean Society of New York.

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#### JOINT MEETING OF BIRD BANDERS.

A joint session of the Bird Banding Associations and the American Ornithologists' Union will be held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the A. O. U., October 17-21, 1938, in Washington, D.C. Headquarters will be at the Hotel Raleigh. One three hour session will be devoted exclusively to papers on bird banding. All banders are urged to attend. Mr. James Lee Peters, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge, Massachusetts, is in charge of the program.

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#### GENERAL NOTES

**Migrating Swamp Sparrows at Groton, Massachusetts.**—The fall migration of 1937 was notable for unusually large numbers of some species. This increased volume was particularly noticeable in the case of Swamp Sparrows (*Melospiza georgiana*) here at Groton. From 1930 to 1936, two hundred eight Swamp Sparrows were banded at the Wharton Bird-Banding Station, an average of a little less than thirty per year. The highest number trapped in a given year in this period being sixty-five in 1936, and the lowest, eight in 1930. In the year 1937, by comparison, one hundred fifty-four individuals of this species were banded.

How these records were distributed by weeks over the period during which the species was caught in the traps, is shown in the accompanying graph, which illustrates the fact that the greatest number was caught in the period between the third week of September and the third week of October.

The Swamp Sparrow population apparently remained relatively stable until the last week of July, when an increase in the number banded took place. This increase, and other smaller additions that took place up to the third week in September, would seem to be attributable to the expected increase of juvenile birds. The peak which culminates in the first week of October is believed to illustrate the passing through of migrants, as is the lesser peak reached in the last week of October. Thus the increase in the number banded during the past fall points to an extraordinarily successful breeding season by this species on its