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## PROGRESS REPORT ON THE COOPERATIVE GULL SURVEY

By R. P. ALLEN and J. J. HICKEY

It is with considerable pleasure that we can announce the completion of the essential ground work of this project by bird-banders. Over a three year period 22,381 Herring Gulls have been marked with celluloid bands, many of them under exceptionally trying conditions. Their numbers by colonies follow:

	1937	1938	1939	<i>Banders</i>
Razades Id., P. Q.....	727	800	780	La Société Provancher d'Histoire Naturelle (Dr. D. A. Déry)
St. Mary Id., P. Q.....	505	175	423	Dr. Harrison F. Lewis, Canadian National Parks
Bonaventure Id., P. Q.....	100	—	—	William M. Duval
Kent Id., N. B. (imm.)... (adults)...	2250 100	3059 720	2900 —	Bowdoin Scientific Expedition (Dr. A. O. Gross)
Duck Id., Me.....	—	285	463	Darrell Mann and John H. Storer
Muscongus Bay, Me.....	683	1491	1512	Audubon Nature Camp (A. D. Cruickshank)
Heron Id., Me.....	700	—	—	Stanley W. Hyde, N.E.B.B.A.
Isles of Shoals, N. H.....	500	788	1000	Edwin A. Mason and A. O. Shelley, N.E.B.B.A.
Penikese Id., Mass.....	500	500	600	Laurence B. Fletcher, N.E.B.B.A.
Wicopasset Id., N. Y.....	75	492	—	Wilfred C. O'Brien, N.A.A.S.
Four Brothers Id., N. Y...	—	209	44	Messrs. Cutler, Glidden, Eldred and Perkins
(Totals)	6140	8519	7722	

By the close of last spring over 1,000 sight records of first and second year birds had already been accepted by the committee. The majority of these came from the New York City area, where an interesting insight is being obtained into the movement of this species past this point on the coast. This picture will be presented in BIRD BANDING later, when all the recoveries are in the hands of the committee. Additional records in quantity are wanted from some other migration station on the Atlantic seaboard, particularly in spring and in summer. Although we are primarily interested in banded birds, we would also greatly appreciate estimates of age ratios of unbanded Herring Gulls at fortnightly intervals in a given locality on the Atlantic seaboard throughout the year.

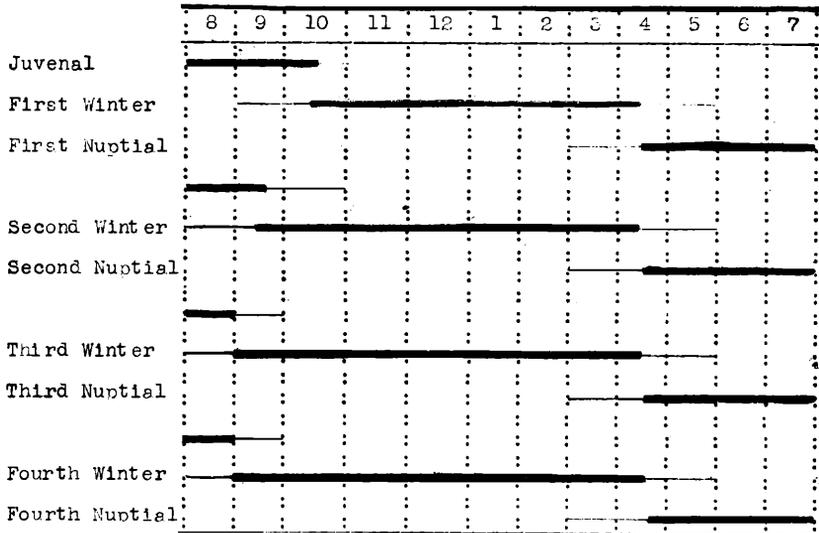
The three main fields of investigation opened up by this project are migration, homing and plumage sequences. Studies of the first are already being pursued in New York and Boston; studies of the second can now be made on the birds' natal islands; over 275 observations on the last have already been reported. We would like to emphasize that however desirable an all inclusive study of these problems might be, covering the entire Atlantic coastline, it must of necessity rest upon intensive regional investigations by local ornithologists. These persons should feel perfectly free to call upon the general records committee for any assistance necessary to publish under their own names accumulations of their own data.

In the present account, we would like to summarize the available information on the subject of plumages, so that bird students may know what to look for in the banded gulls now thronging our eastern harbors. During their first year, Herring Gulls remain in the mottled gray and clove-brown plumage which we all know so well. In their second year they retain the brown phase, but most birds become lighter, and silvery gray feathers appear in the back. This latter sign of approaching maturity varies considerably in the amount of area involved (we saw a banded second-year bird last winter with three-quarters of its back and mantle gray). A partial molt at the end of their second winter produces for a brief period birds with head, neck and underparts largely white, and with gray feathers which may or may not extend over the entire back. In the complete molt which next occurs, a nearly adult plumage is assumed. Most third year birds, according to Dr. Dwight from whom all these statements on plumage are taken,<sup>1</sup> may be known chiefly by the spotting of the tail, by a few dusky feathers in the wings and by dark markings at the angle of the bill.

Systematic observation of these banded birds offers the best short cut to a seasonal breakdown of the occurrence of the various age groups in a given locality. The accompanying table of plumage

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<sup>1</sup> Dwight, Jonathan, 1925. The Gulls (Laridae) of the World; Their Plumages, Moults, Variations Relationships and Distribution. Bull. Am. Mus. Nat. Hist., 52, Art. 3:63-401.



*Duration of Plumages For Average Birds*  
(after Dwight)

Numerals indicate months from August through July

sequences is a condensation of eleven packed pages in Dwight's unrivalled monograph on the subject. It should be remembered that all birds do not follow at the same pace. An unknown proportion of second winter birds actually revert to the first year plumage. Moreover, the *average* third winter plumage is not actually known, very advanced birds being practically adult, while very backward ones are scarcely to be distinguished from advanced second winter birds. Observers are asked, therefore, to report to the committee observations on all birds which they study—rather than on merely extremes. Convenient field cards for this purpose can be obtained without cost from Gull Survey, 1006 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y.

May we point out in closing that with so many banded birds along the coast, an opportunity of an unusual order exists for collectors and museums who would like to build up skin collections of a new and modern character.

1006 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

CONDENSED SUMMARY OF PLUMAGE SEQUENCES OF HERRING GULLS ACCORDING TO DWIGHT  
(Natal down and the succeeding juvenal plumage are omitted)

	<i>First Winter</i>	<i>First Nuptial</i>	<i>Second Winter</i>	<i>Second Nuptial</i>	<i>Third Winter</i>	<i>Third Nuptial</i>	<i>Fourth Winter</i>	<i>Fourth Nuptial</i>
How Acquired . . . . .	Partial molt	Partial (body)	Complete molt	Partial molt	Complete molt	Partial molt	Complete molt	Partial (body)
Time of Molt . . . . .	Sept. to Dec.	Mar. to May	Aug. to Oct.	Mar. to May	Aug. to Sept.	Mar. to May	Aug. to Sept.	Mar. to May
Head . . . . .	Pale clove brown thickly streaked	Whiter; streaked	Whiter; streaked	Largely white conspic. strks.	White; streaked	Pure white; slight strks.	Snowy white, strks. (adult)	(Adult) pure white
Back and Mantle . . . . .	Pale clove brown barred	Same or paler	Brown mottled <sup>1</sup>	Gray area increases	Gray mantle	Same	Adult (neutral gray)	Adult
Wings . . . . .	Deep clove brown	Same	Deeper in color; drab wing band	Same	Mostly gray	Same	Adult	Adult
Underparts . . . . .	Brownish mottled	Whiter	Whiter; blurred	Largely white	Largely white	White	Adult	Adult
Tail . . . . .	Deep clove brown barred	Same	Whiter basally; often darker	Same	Largely white spotted	Same	Adult	Adult
Bill . . . . .	Basal third drab to pinkish	Same	Terminal—blk. with white tip	Yellower basally	Dark bar or spot; varies	Brighter	Yellow; red spot (adult)	Adult
Iris . . . . .	Dark brown	Same	Straw, buff or brown	Same	Straw; yellow or buff	Brighter	Adult	Adult
Feet . . . . .	Fawn or flesh	Same	Pinkish buff or pinkish white	Same	Pale	Brighter	Adult	Adult

<sup>1</sup> See extended comments on page 19.