RECOVERIES FROM MIGRATING BRONZED GRACKLES*

By EDWIN A. MASON

FUNDAMENTAL factors governing bird movements were operative in the spring of 1939 in an usual degree. The most striking result observed along the eastern seaboard was the eruptive invasion of the Eastern Purple Finch (*Carpodacus p. purpureus*), over ten thousand of which were banded. The records obtained were summarized by Weaver (1940), the indication being that the movement may have originated to the south and west of the region invaded, but that there was a trend to the east and south, especially in the early stages, with a returning northerly trend later. During this same period several other species were noted as being present in the area in unusually large numbers. Included were the Common Redpoll (*Acanthis l. linaria*) and the Pine Siskin (*Spinus p. pinus*). At the Wharton Bird Banding Station at Groton, Massachusetts, besides the species just mentioned, there was an unusual visitation of a flock of Bronzed Grackles (*Quiscalus quiscula aeneus*).

The most logical explanation for the presence of this flock of Grackles would seem to be that it had begun its northerly migration, having reached here from a region to the south. The presence of such a flock in the vicinity of the station of itself was not unusual. What was remarkable was the length of time it remained and its ready acceptance of grain bait. Spring flocks of grackles normally range widely over fields and lawns for food. In the spring of 1939, late heavy snows, possibly coupled with other less obvious climatic vagaries, were very likely responsible for the flock staying in the area and turning to grains for food to a greater degree than usual. Snow covered much of the countryside when the flock arrived, making suitable feeding areas at a premium. Thus the flock was attracted to areas in an orchard where the snow had melted in the shade of the apple trees, exposing buckwheat seed that had scattered from the cover crop sown between the rows of trees the previous autumn. As shown by the banding records, the flock remained from April 5 until towards the end of the month. During the latter part of the period, the situation was somewhat complicated by the arrival of birds belonging to the locally nesting group.

The total banded during the period April 5–30, was 130. Only five repeated, the last repeat record being on April 18. It is believed that a general exodus occurred on April 18, only three being banded from that date to the end of the month. A sex ratio of 63:58 was obtained; nine birds were not definitely sexed.

*A contribution from the Wharton Bird Banding Station.

From this group of 130 birds, five recovery records (3.85 %)have been made up to the spring of 1942. The records follow:

BANDED		RECOVERED	
38-360544 ♂	Apr. 18, 1939	St. John, N. B.	May 3, 1940
37-300244 ♀	Apr. 9, 1939	Bathurst, N. B.	May 28, 1940
38-360533 ♂	Apr. 16, 1939	Matapedia, P. Q.	June 15, 1941
37-300256 ♂	Apr. 11, 1939	Pantego, N. C.	Jan. 24, 1940
38-360541 ♂	Apr. 17, 1939	Southampton Co., Va.	Jan. 27, 1942

To assume that the recovery records made by members of this flock of grackles indicate both nesting and wintering grounds, implies the retention of flock unity from the time fall migration begins until arrival in the general nesting region the following spring. The joining together of local nesting colonies into flocks immediately following the nesting season occurs. Such a flock was observed in Groton, Massachusetts on July 28, 1932, flocking to roost in large hardwood trees killed by damming the Nashua River. The flock numbered "hundreds", and was believed to contain also some Red-winged Blackbirds (*Agelaius p. phoeniceus*) and possibly Starlings (*Sturnus v. vulgaris*). Forbush (1927) also refers to the fall flocking of these birds, saying it occurs before the end of August. Observations of the arrival in spring of this species seem to bear out the theory of flock unity, large flocks arriving, later to disintegrate into smaller nesting colonies.

Excepting the many return records made during the spring and summer at the banding station and within a twenty mile radius of it, which incidently prove the general tendency of the species to return to nest to the same region, only the following recovery records from the grackles banded at Groton during the spring and summer months have been recorded:

BANDED		RECOVERED	
A373752 Juvenile	July 11, 1932	Jamesville, N. C.	Dec. 23, 1935
34-364858 ♂	June 9, 1938	Plymouth, N. C.	Nov. 14, 1938
38-360562 ♀	May 3, 1939	Stony Point, N. Y.	Apr. 1, 1940

Since 1932, a total of 513 local nesting grackles and their progeny have been banded. Yet to date not one recovery has been recorded from a locality at any distance to the north of Groton.

It is believed that the three recovery records in Canada from the migrating flock of grackles banded at Groton in April, 1939, are indicative of the general nesting territory of that flock. It is also believed that the two recovery records made during subsequent Januaries indicate the general wintering grounds of that flock. It is further believed that these records of banded grackles, and the sex ratio obtained, indicate the homogeneity of regional grackle flocks, and tend to show that flock unity is retained during fall migration, on the wintering grounds and during spring migration. Behaviorism such as this would be a potent influence in molding geographical subspecific forms.

LITERATURE CITED

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1927 FORBUSH, EDWARD HOWE, Birds of Massachusetts and other New England States, Vol. II p. 460.

Wharton Bird Banding Station, Groton, Massachusetts.

BEHAVIOR OF YOUNG BANK SWALLOWS AFTER FIRST LEAVING THE NEST

By DAYTON STONER

IN former reports (*Auk*, 43: 198–213, 1926; *ibid.*, 45: 41–45, 1928) I indicated that in Iowa, young Bank Swallows following initial flight, frequently wandered some distance from the parental abode, and often temporarily inhabited any burrow that might be at hand. At this period of their lives, therefore, family ties were broken and the identity of a given brood vanished. Again, at Oneida Lake New York, corroborative evidence of this circumstance has been offered (Roosevelt Wild Life Annals, 4, No. 2 : 122–233, 1936) through records obtained from the repeat recoveries of banded nestlings.

In an attempt to ascertain whether this phenomenon was still more widespread, perhaps universal in its scope within the geographic range of the bird, repeat records of young Bank Swallows banded and recovered in the Albany, New York area have been examined. The results of this review are presented in the following paragraphs.

No. H-94108, immature; banded June 27, 1933, in a sand pit ten miles west of Albany; another immature banded as No. H-94109 was in the same burrow; both were able to fly well. No. H-94108 was recaptured June 28, 1933, in a burrow fifteen feet from the one from which it was banded; the burrow contained two other banded immature repeats reared therein along with an unbanded bird from another burrow. Therefore, representatives of three different families were present in the burrow from which the three repeats were taken.

No. H-94110, immature; banded June 27, 1933, in a sand pit ten miles west of Albany. Recaptured next day in the same burrow but with an unbanded immature individual. Evidently the latter had entered the burrow some time during the twenty-four hours intervening between our visits.

No. H-94140, immature; banded June 28, 1933, in a gravel pit six miles northwest of Albany. Another immature was banded at