

GENERAL NOTES

Predator Value.—Much has been said by conservationists of the value of predators in eliminating the unfit. The following observations tend to support that view and we offer them as isolated instances; certain in one case, with quite a degree of probability in the other.

One August day in 1923 a boy brought us a tame crow which he had removed from the nest earlier in the season. Finding the bird less attractive as it grew older, he was going to release it but wanted it banded. On August 10, 1923, we affixed band number 209173. About three weeks later, while passing along a woodland border, we were surprised to see a crow coming toward us, uttering hungry cries. As it permitted itself to be picked up, we noted the band and identified the individual banded on August 10th. It was badly emaciated although it was a season of food abundance for the species, but this young crow had missed the training that would fit it to cope with its environment. On September 12, 1923, in this same locality, a Red-shouldered Hawk was seen swiftly approaching. A second after it disappeared in the trees, an agonized cry from a crow was heard. Almost at once a flock of crows appeared and the hawk was driven away. A brief search disclosed No. 209173 dead with talon marks in its head and neck. Thus terminated what would have ended by starvation had not some other predator intervened meanwhile.

On October 30, 1943, we drove a Northern Shrike from our banding station. Returning, we noted near a trap the body of a chickadee, hanging from the fork of a bush. Examining it, we recognized band No. 37-58843. This bird was banded on April 19, 1938, and was at least nearly a year old. When killed by the shrike, this individual was well along in its seventh year and may have been older. The age of six years is rather advanced for chickadees. The locality was favorable for a chickadee's escape because of a thick growth of Canada plums and choke cherries, almost impenetrable to a bird as large as a shrike but offering shelter to one of chickadee size. There were at least six or eight other chickadees around. We do not know their age but of the returns taken that season no other was more than three years old, and of the 16 banded, none showed evidence of old age. It seems likely that No. 37-58843 fell a victim because of age making the bird a little less agile than its companions, and, if so, again one has an example of the elimination of a failing individual before the environment could do its worst.—WENDELL P. SMITH, Wells River, Vermont.

A Red-breasted Nuthatch Recovery.—Red-breasted Nuthatch, adult, No. 140-47131, banded March 28, 1942, was retaken on April 20, 1944, and again on October 15, 1945. This individual was at least in its fifth year.

The Red-breasted Nuthatch is more common as a migrant in Wells River although a small number breed and a smaller number winter. The seasons when this individual was taken may or may not determine its status as a migrant. Like many of the data accumulated at a banding station, they stimulate curiosity which can be both satisfied and stimulated by more facts.—WENDELL P. SMITH, Wells River, Vermont.

Behavior of Cardinals Toward a Newly-banded Female of the Same Species.—On a rainy afternoon in late April, 1946, I took a wet and rather bedraggled female cardinal (*Richmondia cardinalis*) from one of my traps, applied a band in the usual manner, and released the bird. It had been in the trap less than half an hour. This bird was one of two females which had been consorting with a male cardinal for approximately three weeks preceding this incident. After the bird was banded she flew into a nearby tree and proceeded to preen her feathers. Presently, the other female and the male appeared, and the rival female began to peck vigorously at the new band. This continued for several minutes. Finally the unbanded female boldly attacked the other, pecking her