

based on 81 birds banded up to the beginning of the period, gives a population of 127. This is obviously too high because of variations in the numbers of the departures and arrivals previously discussed. On the assumption that the arrivals and departures were of the same order of magnitude and that the "old" birds visited the traps as frequently as the "new" ones from April 20th to May 11th, a sample between these dates, based on 67 banded individuals, would indicate a population of 113 birds as shown by sample No. 10. An average of samples Nos. 7, 9, 10 and 11 gives a population of 115 as an over-all figure. These are believed to be too high as the new arrivals appeared to rely more on the newly discovered food supply than the older birds which were no doubt more widely distributed and familiar with other food supplies. A still more valid assumption is that there was a larger number of departures than arrivals. These factors appear to give a somewhat higher population than it actually was. I believe a somewhat lower value of 105 to 110 is probably closer to the actual numbers over the period of this study.

Much of the credit for the success of this study is due Mrs. Shaub, who spent many hours, in the writer's absence, tending the traps and keeping the record. .

#### LITERATURE CITED

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#### GENERAL NOTES

**A Twelve-year-old Sooty Tern in Arkansas.**—A Sooty Tern (*Sterna fuscata* L.) wearing U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service band No. 38-352683 was found dead on Highway 110, near Shirley, Van Buren County, Arkansas, on September 4, 1950. This individual was banded as an immature on June 23, 1938, at Garden Key, Dry Tortugas, Florida. Correspondence with Mrs. Ray Murray, of Route 2, Shirley, Arkansas, finder of the bird, indicates that there is little doubt as to the authenticity of this record.—J. C. Dickinson, Jr., Department of Biology, University of Florida, Gainesville.

(*Ed. Note:* a brief check of published records suggests this may be the first definite record for the species north of the Gulf of Mexico (Louisiana and Texas) and west of the Appalachians-Tennessee and W. Virginia.)

**A New Method of Capturing Chimney Swifts.**—The classical method of capturing Chimney Swifts (*Chaetura pelagica* L.) involves setting a trap atop a chimney sometime during the hours of darkness. As day approaches, the swifts leave the chimney and are guided into a gathering cage attached to the trap. Although this is an admirable procedure when used on flocks of swifts, it leaves much to be desired when one is studying breeding birds.

During my study of the nesting behavior of this species, a technique was developed which has greatly expedited their capture. At first a small wooden box was fastened, open part up, to the end of a thin pole about 18 feet long, the idea being to scoop the birds off the chimney wall. But as the device was lowered, the swifts fluttered deeper and deeper into the chimney, until they were almost in the fireplace of the unoccupied house.

Further thought yielded a solution which has never failed. On either side and just under the lip of a tall coffee or fruit juice can two holes are punched—one on either side. The ends of a piece of string 4 feet long are tied to each hole.

giving a "handle" 2 feet long. To the top part of this handle is fastened one end of a ball of kite string.

After dark the bander climbs up on the roof to the chimney (very quietly and stealthily since the swifts are surprisingly light sleepers) and covers the top with an insect net or trout landing net. Then a flashlight is shined down the chimney to see if swifts are present; a headlight is infinitely superior, for besides leaving both hands free it directs a beam of light to wherever one turns his head. When birds are present a quantity of the kite string is payed out in advance—enough to permit the can to be lowered rapidly to a point below the lowest swift. The biggest problem in this work is to prevent the frightened birds from dropping down into the fireplace or whatever the chimney connects with; getting the can down rapidly solves it. One should take care not to allow the can to bang against the chimney wall, for the noise may send the swifts fluttering up into his face and some may escape.

To secure any desired swift, the can is brought up to it from below so that it does not quite touch the bird's tail, whereupon a quick upward jerk scoops the individual into the can. Once in, a bird is apparently completely unable to escape, for it cannot gain a foothold on the slippery sides nor can it raise itself up with its wings. The swifts are hoisted up one by one and placed in a gathering cage, fastened to the operator's belt, to be taken indoors later where they may be banded and studied in detail.

If there are several adults, and young that are able to fly, in a chimney, it has been found best to capture the uppermost one first and keep working down; however, at this point the bander may have to adjust his procedure to the conditions at hand. When a lower individual is caught, the rising can sometimes frighten the upper ones into flight, and they come fluttering up to the bander at an inappropriate time; quickly covering the top with a net will prevent escapes. Should it become evident that birds are moving dangerously far down the chimney, the can should again be dropped rapidly below the lowest swift and then deliberately banged against the sides or bottom to drive them back up.

Having completed one's examinations, the swifts are returned to their chimney. If a bird be placed on the inside wall as far down as the bander can reach, it will usually drop deeper of its own accord. The advantages of this method are obvious enough: since no traps are required, a great many chimneys may be "worked" on the same night, and one need not lose time waiting for the swifts to emerge. In order to capture Chimney Swifts nesting inside buildings, the reader may wish to consult an earlier paper in *Bird-Banding*, Vol. 15, No. 2, pps. 68-71.

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**Some Recoveries of Black-crowned Night Herons.**—Few sight records were obtained from Black-crowned Night Herons (*Nycticorax n. naevius* Boddaert) color-banded in eastern Massachusetts in 1939 and 1940, as part of the Heron Survey. Six recoveries were reported in the years 1939 through 1942, along the Atlantic coast from Massachusetts to Florida. It was a pleasant surprise to receive two additional recoveries from the Hobbs Brook Basin rookery at Waltham, after a gap of more than eight years and within six days of each other. The following list includes all individuals of this subspecies known to have lived ten years or more, based on the files at the Patuxent Research Refuge in October 1950.

- 335776, banded at Barnstable, Mass., June 17, 1925 by L. B. Fletcher, was found at Matanzas, Cuba (letter of February 10, 1940).
- 210243, banded at Rowsonville, Mich., June 14, 1929 by T. L. Hankinson, was found dead at Collins Shoals, Tenn., on April 5, 1951.
- A702343, banded at East Springfield, Mass., June 30, 1929 by H. E. Woods, was found dead near Springfield about May 1, 1944 (this recovery was published in *Bird-Banding*, 17: 64, and still represents the oldest individual known for this subspecies).
- 542689, banded at Indian Head, Saskatchewan, July 9, 1932 by G. Lang, was found in July 1942 near Weyburn, Saskatchewan.
- B642712, banded at North Eastham, Mass., June 15, 1933 by O. L. Austin, was found dead at Great Pond, Provincetown, Mass. (probable date of death: fall of 1947).