

Eastern Regional News

Eastern Bird Banding Association

Founded 1923

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Eastern Regional News is published quarterly in *North American Bird Bander* by the Eastern Bird Banding Association. Applications for membership and changes of address should be sent to the Treasurer. The dues: Active Members — \$8.00 per year; Sustaining Members — \$16.00 per year; Student Members — \$6.00 per year; Life Membership — \$200.00. Non-subscribing Members — \$3.00 per year. Canadian and foreign memberships add \$2.00. Contributions to the Eastern Bird Banding Association are tax deductible.

President's Message

In this issue of *NABB* which is dedicated to Raymond Middleton, you will find a tribute and a list of his records and accomplishments by Bill Pepper. For those of us who knew him personally, it will be his spirit that will be remembered. Raymond never missed an annual meeting that I know of, and that is remarkable considering he was a charter member and belonged to our Association for over 50 years. He served in many capacities for EBBA and contributed many papers to *EBBA News* and *NABB*. I will miss his handshake at annual meetings and his conversations about bird banding. But, most of all, I will miss his infectious spirit.

Since this is my last message as president, it is appropriate that I thank various people within our organization. If anything has been accomplished at all during my term in office, it is because of the fine cooperation I have received from the officers, councillors, and chairpersons who have served with me.

The work is not over, however. I urge everyone in our Association to serve on one of EBBA's committees or in some other capacity when asked. Please give the incoming president and officers your continued support.

Our merger with WBBA has been a successful one, and some of that success is because of the unending, meticulous attention of Eleanor and Don Radke in publishing *NABB*, and to the cooperative spirit that Western's officers and councillors have given me over the past two years.

Recently I have had an opportunity to look over some of EBBA's very old archives. In much of the correspondence, EBBA's old slogan is often repeated: "Let Us Band Together." In at least one old piece of correspondence, there is another thought which is, I believe, even more appropriate: "We Must Band Together."

Robert Pantle

Who Is? . . . Margaret Donnal

Margaret Donnal is currently our secretary. She lives in Potomac, Maryland with her husband, Morrill, who is also an active birder and bander.

Margaret grew up in Kansas. At the present time, she is the president/manager of Enamelists Gallery Inc. (a cooperative art gallery) in Alexandria, VA.

Her banding interests began as a novice with Operation Recovery in North Ocean City, MD under Chandler Robbins and Gladys Cole. Since 1972, she has conducted a study of migration at ADVENTURE on the fall line in Maryland. She does full-time spring and fall banding with special emphasis on training both adults and students. She has 10-12 sub-permittees and 20-25 aides/trainees each year. Her station averages 115 days of banding and more than 5,000 birds banded each year.

For more than 30 years Margaret has been a member of the Washington Cathedral Chorus, a 250-voice concert chorus.

As other interests, Margaret enjoys traveling and photography — especially in the tropics around the world — with special emphasis on botany and birds.

Maurice Broun

A long-time bander and the first curator of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, Maurice Broun, passed away on 2 October 1979. Albert Conway is writing a fitting memorial to be published in a later issue of *NABB*.

Historical Albums—still missing

After the EBBA Meeting in Cape May in 1977, the historical albums were missing. They were packed into a box during the clean-up after Saturday night's program. Please check any boxes you may have taken home for these valuable albums, and notify the editor if you locate them.

EBBA recaptured birds

In *NABB* 4:4, page 175, we reported that Raymond Middleton had volunteered to be a clearing person for reports of recaptured birds in our area. It is with regret that we must withdraw this offer (see president's message). If there is someone who would be interested in replacing Mr. Middleton, please notify the editor.

Raymond J. Middleton

30 March 1898 to 26 January 1980

Raymond Middleton was one of the oldest in length of membership in EBBA, and surely a record holder in attendance at our meetings and in friendships with other members. He was elected an Honorary Member at the last Annual Meeting.

He contributed many papers, both at our meetings and for publication in various journals.

He had served on EBBA's council for several terms and on numerous committees.

George M. Jonkel, Chief of the Bird Banding Laboratory, has stated that Mr. Middleton had operated an active banding station for the longest time of any bander. At the time of his death he had held a permit longer than any other bander. His permit, which he received in 1921, was number 2073, which attests to this record.

In addition to his outstanding services to EBBA and to bird banding, he had also served as President of the Audubon Club of Norristown, PA, from 1932 to 1974, and was honored by the club for this remarkable service. He had also been cited for having a perfect attendance record for fifty years at the Norristown Club.

Mr. Middleton was one of the oldest members of the American Ornithologists' Union, having joined in 1920, and a member for many years of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club, which he joined in 1927.

In addition to his principal interest in ornithology, he served and was recognized for his services in his local community. Mr. Middleton served as Secretary, Vice President, and President of the West Norristown School Board. In 1970 he received the Golden Deeds Award of the Exchange Club of West Norristown and was given a special certificate as "Outstanding Alumnus of 4H Club Work" by the 4H Clubs of Montgomery County, PA.

Through the entire time that he banded, Mr. Middleton worked at one location — his home and place of business — where he operated, with other family members, a large pigeon and chicken farm.



Occasionally, he went to a nearby location to band an interesting bird or two.

For the last few years, a deteriorating hip joint limited his ability to enjoy the field trips of the EBBA meetings, but he never let it stop him from attending the meetings or taking part in them.

In 1923 he married Elizabeth Dewees. She, their son, Raymond Jr., and two daughters, survive him.

Those of us who knew him well will remember Raymond as a quiet, reserved friend, ever ready to exchange experiences about birds and bird banding.

Contributed by William Pepper

Who are . . . Honorary members

LeRoy C. Stegeman

All of LeRoy Stegeman's bird banding has been done in Michigan and Central New York state.

Mr. Stegeman taught zoology and ecology at the State University of New York, College of Environmental Sciences and Forestry at Syracuse, NY, from July 1929 to August 1965. His first banding experience was as assistant to Professor J.W. Stack at Michigan State University in East Lansing, MI in 1926-28. Since then he has banded as opportunity permitted. Following retirement in 1965, he has banded at his summer home in Salisbury, NY.

Mr. Stegeman has made a study of weights and weight variation in small birds in central NY. One report was published in *Bird-Banding* 5:26 (1955). He made a series of "Bird Portraits" while banding, and these can be purchased from Ward's Natural Sciences of Rochester, NY.

Now in his 80's, he finds he has less energy and is considering becoming inactive as a bander.

To quote Mr. Stegeman: "I highly recommend banding for those who have a sincere interest in birds. Banding has increased our knowledge of the ecological values and relationships of birds, including their relationship to man. We can now deal more wisely with birds' welfare and control.

"I have enjoyed many experiences that increased my awareness of the wonderful world of nature. My 54 years with the birds have been most rewarding."



Michael T. Clark

Bill and Margaret Pepper

Margaret and Bill Pepper

Margaret and Bill Pepper were named as Honorary Members of EBBA last annual meeting for their long-time dedication to EBBA.

They joined EBBA in the early 30's. Bill was treasurer for some time beginning in 1934. He served under his father during the latter's presidency of EBBA in 1936.

At the ages of 77 and 75 respectively, they are still banding in Philadelphia, PA. From 1928 to 1979 they banded 102,212 birds of 181 species. They have both written articles for EBB News over the years on many subjects.

Margaret related a few bits which she thought interesting: "Our best recovery was a Least Tern, banded at Strathmere, NJ in 1938, recovered in British Guiana in 1956." She also told of an unusual experience: "On return to the car (the door having been left open) from net-checking at Island Beach, we found that 2 catbirds had flown into the car — hard on the record sheets." Apparently during the same time, another little incident occurred, for she relates, "Bill picked a Golden-crowned Kinglet off a cedar tree where a little group were busy feeding."

★ ★ ★

Bill has shared with me a short piece that he thinks was done in the late 1960's or early 1970's, and I am herewith sharing it with our readers. Ed.

Fifty Years a Bird Bander—Well Almost

On 7 June 1914 my father banded his first bird, a nestling catbird — one of many nestlings to be banded in those early years. That first year he banded only 105 birds of 18 species. Until 1924 he banded only during the summer months, when home from work, or on vacation. This hobby was to continue until shortly before his death in 1948.

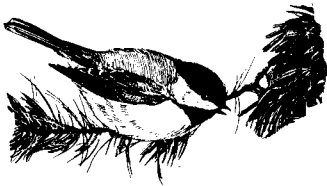
How soon after that first bird I began to help him there is no record, nor do I remember. I have a photograph of myself, taken by my father about 1914 when I was all of nine years old (a little young even for a sub-permittee), holding a Herring Gull. It looks very dead and is almost as large as I was. I also remember helping to extricate Leach's Petrels from their nesting burrows on some small islands off Mount Desert, Maine. This was done between

1915 and 1917. I also recall being rewarded for locating nests at home in Pennsylvania.

There is no record of when I actually may have first banded a bird for my father, because his records, and mine also — now that I think of it — do not show whether birds were banded by sons, daughters, or wives.

It was only after I married and left home in 1927, and received my own banding permit, that I have definite dates of my bandings.

Between us, except for 1923, we have banded at least a few birds each year since 1927, despite several world wars and other interruptions. My father's total was 13,174 birds banded of 116 species. My own total is 34,473 of 143 species. Together we have banded 47,647 birds of 162 species. Most of these have been banded within a 20-mile circle of Philadelphia, PA, but we have banded birds from Newfoundland down to the Okefenokee Swamp in Georgia, where more birds were found inside a snake caught in a bird trap than were banded during the trip. The Okefenokee Swamp is our most western banding point, also.



Banding surprise

On 7 November 1979, I opened the banding station at Birdcraft Sanctuary, CT Audubon Society, Fairfield, CT. The threat of rain showers and falling leaves tempted me to leave the mist nets closed and use Potter traps at our feeding station. However, enthusiasm prompted me to open the nets.

The morning was spent picking leaves and a few White-throated Sparrows from the nets. I decided to close the nets at noon for lack of activity, when a green-feathered jewel in the nets caught my eye.

I proceeded with the banding, measuring, aging, and sexing — and applying band-aids to fingers — of several Cardinals and chickadees before savoring the gem remaining in the capture bag. It had to be the highlight of a day that tested one's patience, with too few birds and too many leaves in the nets.

Some of my father's methods of catching birds were rather interesting — from lassoing a nighthawk, dozing on a low limb, with the aid of a long fly rod and fish line loop, to catching terns perched on bridge railings, with a long-handled landing net while someone drove him slowly past in his car. I recall a drawbridge lamp which was too close to an attempted catch and which ended up at the bottom of the channel — (“Drive on, Bill”).

An interesting fact, possibly as a result of its relation to the early days of United State banding, is that I can find no record of my father having caught a bird banded by anyone else, except during one summer's stay at Northeast Harbor, Maine, when there were three banders trapping within sight of each other. However, his records of foreign recoveries may have been mislaid.

I only wish he could have been with us these past five years to enjoy the thrilling experience of netting at the annual Island Beach Operation Recovery, when a single day's catch often exceeded many of his annual catches.



The bird keyed out to be a Tennessee Warbler (*Vermivora peregrina*) of HY age. It was banded (1540-16220), measured, skulled, and released. It appeared in very good condition.

Checking through several books and the last three years of Fall migration reports in *American Birds*, I concluded that this bird has to one of the latest records for the species in this area.

As I think back to the other “surprises” we have come across at Birdcraft Station, they seemed to appear on days of light activity or of threatening weather. I guess there are some days when it pays to get out of bed!

Carl Trichka
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