

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 \$4.50. Contributions to the Eastern Bird Banding Association are tax deductible.

President's Message

During a Tropical Ecology Field Trip in the wilderness of Mexico this past January, I observed North American migrants both from the East and the West together on the same wintering grounds. I watched with fascination what they were doing, how they divided up the use of the habitat with each other and the local birds, how they distributed themselves from 11,000 ft (3300 m) timberline down to sea level. Their foraging habits were not always what one is accustomed to. Imagine male and female Ruby-crowned Kinglets in the uplands foraging high in pine and fir with Hermit Warblers and Townsend's Warblers, and also in scrub near the ground with Audubon's Warblers and the endemic Red Warblers. Those orange-faced warblers in the lower altitudes were none other than Nashville Warblers whose faces were powdered with pollen from sipping nectar. Orange-crowned Warblers nectared from high mountains to sea level. At 8000 ft (2400 m) tropical forest male Wilson's Warblers appeared to outnumber females. The Black-and-white Warblers banded and observed in riparian scrub at 600 ft (180 m) were all females. The males appeared in our samples in a 6400 ft (1950 m) cloud forest.

How would we notice these things except that we were noting the sex of our birds? How else would wildlife management people realize that different habitats may be needed on wintering grounds to save both sexes of a species?

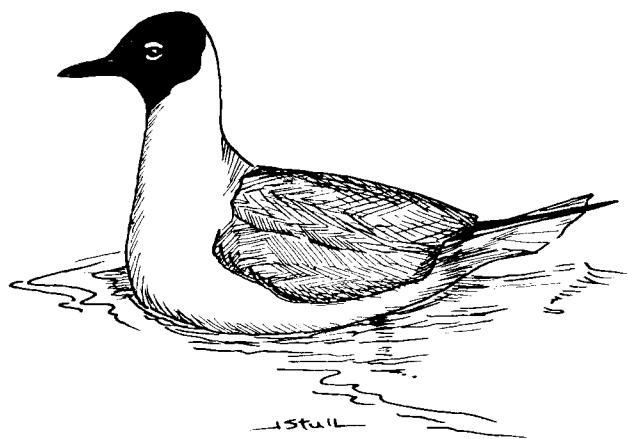
And where do all the young birds on their wintering grounds return to breed? In my old fields here in New Jersey a small percentage of Blue-winged Warblers, Common Yellowthroats, Gray Catbirds, Song and Field Sparrows come back to breed on their natal grounds. The young Chestnut-sided Warblers, Yellow Warblers, and Chats disperse — where?

If banders worked together locally or regionally and compiled the return data from fledglings banded on their natal grounds, wouldn't we have some answers? Or if banders knew how to tell SY birds among their breeding community?

Think of what you can contribute to the pool of knowledge by ageing and sexing your birds!

Yours for more meaningful projects.

Hannah Suthers



Rehabilitated gull returns

Betsy Jones

In July 1982 we noticed a second year Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*) taking food put out for our fledgling robins. It was wearing a band and we assumed it was one of the rehabilitated gulls we had released earlier in the summer. It appeared and disappeared at intervals during July, August, September, and October.

On 6 November, while we were away, the bird followed one of our volunteers into the gull enclosure. She was not certain whether it belonged in or out, so she let it remain in the pen. On our return, we caught it and read the band.

To our amazement we learned that it was a bird we had treated for a fractured wing and released in September of 1981. It had evidently made a migration and returned because it could not have wintered in this latitude, 40°N. This return clearly points out the value of banding in the release of rehabilitated birds.

We re-released the gull on 8 November and have not seen it since. Perhaps next year.

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