



Eastern Regional News

Eastern Bird Banding Association

Founded 1923

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President's Message

On 3 March 1978, I banded Song Sparrow 1221-80220, an AHY male, in my yard in Hopewell, New Jersey. Notable about this territorial male was his unusual song. It was upside down, going down in pitch from starting point where the ordinary Song Sparrow raised the pitch. I could trace by ear this distinctly marked bird as he made his rounds about the yard. In early spring 1979 that unmistakable song at daybreak could hardly have been a more effective wake up call! I trapped him on 25 March. Likewise I set out to capture this haunting songster on 18 March 1980, and 29 March 1981. In March 1982, nothing. The bird would have been over 6 years of age. In 1983 there it was again! Only this year the song was interchanged with a nearly normal song. His son? Perhaps. I banded him 1291-26687.

Beyond curious anecdotes like this, valuable information can be gleaned from returns to the yard and field. The Bird Banding Laboratory wants longevity records for birds close to or exceeding the records collated by Kennard, 1975, in *Bird Banding* 46:55-73, and any unusual seasonal records which we believe are of significance.

Fidelity to breeding grounds and wintering grounds in North America are well known. Less known is the dispersal of the young. In how many species, backyard or otherwise, have the young come back to their natal grounds to breed? What is the timing of their arrival compared with that of their elders? How near their

natal territory do they manage to establish their territory? Is it in inferior territory, marginal to choice spots? Do young females pair with age mates, or with older males in prime territory? Do brood sizes change with age of the female? Brood success? Are young birds multibrooded from the start? Have old multi-returned parents become less efficient? Answers to life-history questions such as these can be obtained from returns.

Data on individual changes in our returns can be useful. Increase in wing and tail measurements with age could compound problems in separating sexes by wing length, or difficulties in separating species such as HY/SY Black-capped from Carolina Chickadees in their overlapping geographical ranges, or certain *Empidonax* flycatchers during migration. Multiple returns can tell us for how many years these increases occur. What information can you contribute on soft part changes and feather retention of known SY returns that could be used in ageing new captures?

From time to time we need to leaf through the Notes for Further Study in our Bird Banding Manual II when we are planning projects. There is much to be learned about our particular common species that return data can help answer.

Many happy returns!

Hannah Suthers

Edward M. Johnson — 1921-1983

Ed was not well known to the general membership of EBBA because he was neither a bander nor a birder. Yet, Ed was as much a part of our organization as you and I. Edward M. Johnson Printing Company produced EBBA News for well over 25 years, from the time Frank Frazier Sr. became editor until I resigned from that post in 1976 when NABB was conceived.

Ed was a craftsman from the old school. He took EBBA News from camera-ready typewritten copy, assisted with layout, made constructive suggestions, and he did this on his own. In addition, he charged EBBA prices that were well below the norm. All our stationery was printed at his company and he assisted with the design of EBBA's logo.

I first met Ed in 1969 when I took over the editorship from Frank Frazier, Jr. It was always a joy to drive the News in its pre-printed form over to Belleville, NJ, because that led to the opportunity to sit with Ed awhile and chat about EBBA, about birds, politics, and those

folks on the other side of the river (New York). Through Ed I got to know Chris and Ruth Rose better because they picked up the News from him and mailed it out. Ed was at that time active in scouting, so were the Roses and, ultimately, I caught that fever too.

In 1973, at EBBA's 50th anniversary meeting, EBBA council made Ed an Honorary Member, something he and his Wife, Florence, cherished. How well I recall them at that Island Beach meeting.

The Johnsons have a son, Craig (34) in England, and two daughters, Laura and Christine.

At the beginning of May, Ed was hospitalized for lung cancer. He left us on 31 May 1983. Those wishing to honor him may contribute to the American Cancer Society.

Fred S. Schaeffer
2nd Vice President