civora forficata). It was in rather worn plumage, with new feathers partly out, and was working southward, alone. Records of this bird for Florida are so few, that I am publishing this one, as I did a previous record, though both these records, as well as unpublished records of other species, will appear in my forthcoming book, the "Birds of Florida."—HAROLD H. BAILEY, *Miami Beach, Fla.*

BIRD BANDING NEWS

Conducted by Wm. I. Lyon

ADVENTURES IN BIRD BANDING

By Kathleen M. Hempel

Having been interested in birds since childhood, and having for a number of years kept migration schedules and other notes, I had come to the conclusion that I knew a great deal about the subject. Then I took up banding and it did not take me very long to discover just how little I did know. The subject is vast, has wonderful possibilities, and I feel we have just begun to scratch the surface. I think very few of us realize what a remarkable discovery this was, the placing of bands on living birds. In a few years all other methods of studying birds at close range will seem obsolete and out of date, and every ornithologist will be a bander. The best part of this study is that when one begins it, it is almost impossible for him to stop, for it is wonderfully fascinating. If one be forced to discontinue the work for a short time, he comes back to it with more enthusiasm than ever, firmly resolved to either exceed or break his previous records. I have found this true of myself, at least.

I have been banding birds since the winter of 1920. I shall never forget the first bird I caught. It was a chickadee, and I have never been able to discover which was the more frightened, the little gray bird or myself. But since that time I have banded 624 birds of thirty species, which does not include the times I have handled repeats. Most of these birds were adults, and the majority of the nestlings banded were House Wrens just about to leave the nesting box. Personally I do not care about banding nestlings; they are too dull and uninteresting. I much prefer to handle the adult birds, and last spring I do not think I banded any nestlings, except for the wrens already mentioned.

Following is the list of birds which I have banded with the returns for each: Catbird 38, returns 10; Robin 65, returns 3; Bronzed Grackle 76, returns 4; Blue Jay 125, returns 18; Black-capped Chickadee 55, returns 13; Tufted Titmouse 4; White-breasted Nuthatch 35, returns 19; Red-breasted Nuthatch 4; Downy Woodpecker 31, returns 19; Hairy Woodpecker 9, returns 3; Red-headed Woodpecker 15, returns 3; Red-bellied Woodpecker 6; Flicker 8; House Wren 38, return 1; Baltimore Oriole 11; Mourning Dove 4; Purple Martin 9, return 1; Brown Thrasher 15, return 1; Rose-breasted Grosbeak 8; Chipping Sparrow 8; Maryland Yellowthroat 3; White-throated Sparrow 1; Ovenbird 1; Gray-cheeked Thrush 1. All of these were captured in my yard with the exception of the Mourning Doves, three of which were nestlings and the other an adult captured by a friend. Other birds not trapped in the yard but banded afield were Field Sparrow 4; Nighthawk 4; Bank Swallow 3; and Red-winged Blackbird 1. The last-named was a female that had been wounded in the wing. She wintered on our sleeping-porch and in the spring we released her.

With the exception of those specified, all the above birds have entered my traps. It may be of interest to some to know the kinds of traps used. I have a government sparrow trap, two pull-string traps and just at present I am trying out an Everset. If I were asked which trap I prefer, I could not say. It was in the government trap that I caught the yellowthroats and the thrush. The birds are quite changeable, for sometimes weeks will pass and not a bird will enter the pull-string, and then they will flock to it, leaving the government trap entirely deserted. Or it may be just the other way around. One can never tell just what the birds will do. The strange part of it is, that the birds in the winter use the pull-strings most and in summer seem to prefer the government trap. I have caught a great many Blue Jays in the latter.

Many birds that I feed in the winter bring their young to the traps in the summer for food. Last summer I had the following old birds go into the traps and take the young in with them to feed them: Blue Jays, Brown Thrashers, Red-headed Woodpeckers. They all brought their babies to eat suet, and the very worst trick ever played by an unnatural mother was played on me by a Catbird. She brought three of her children which were just able to fly and whose little tails were just visible, then she deserted them. They fairly lived in the pull string traps and grew up strong and well, as I kept a variety of foods out for them—nuts, bread, seeds and suet. I banded them all. They became very fearless and I was proud of my foster children.

I have had many questions about how I catch Blue Jays. I seem to have more of this species than any other, yet some people cannot entice even *one* into their traps. I think the jays are more wary in the winter, and although they do come around and I catch them fairly often, they are not nearly so abundant as in the summer. This leads me to believe that jays do migrate a bit farther south in the winter, although some of them are permanent residents. In the summer they are quite bold, and are sometimes desperately in need of food for their young, so that is the time when I trap the most of them. The latter part of June and all of July is the best time for jays.

I have captured many kinds of woodpeckers. Not one of these was caught in a tree-trunk trap, but all were caught in traps that I have on the ground. The birds go to them no matter where they are moved, and it seems that I have no trouble in getting them at all. I cannot explain the reason why they go to the traps—they just go. They have not yet discovered the Everset trap, and I shall be interested in seeing how long it will be before they find it. The chickadees discovered it in a few hours and I caught two the first day.

I have learned a few things by trapping that I could not have learned in any other way. For instance, I did not know that the Hairy Woodpecker had a clear quavering whistle, shrill and loud like a child's toy whistle. But one day about two years ago I had one in my trap and he gave this strange call. On reporting it to the Biological Survey I found that it was a call known to very few ornithologists and very seldom heard. So I thought myself particularly fortunate.

So often people ask the question, "Which is the most interesting bird that comes to your traps?" It is a hard question to answer, but after watching some of the antics of the Blue Jays I came to the conclusion that they were interesting enough for special observation. It is a well known fact that jays rob the nests of other birds and devour the young. I once saw a jay kill and carry off a

young wren that was just learning to fly. But I made the strange discovery last summer, that Blue Jays do not disdain a dead bird either, rather regarding one as a tasty morsel. I chanced on the discovery in this manner. We have a martin house and try as we will we cannot eradicate the sparrows or keep them from it. I always trap and kill a great many and one day about ten or twelve sparrows were in the government trap at once. I drowned the lot and threw them in a pile in the garden, as I was then very busy, and in about half an hour I returned to bury them. To my astonishment they were gone. I accused a stray cat of making away with them, but was not sure. I thought I would experiment and so kept putting the dead sparrows in the same place each time I caught and killed one. They disappeared in such a short time that I could not account for it, for I never saw a cat about. But one day I chanced to see a jay in a plum tree, and he was tearing up something and devouring it with great relish. I went for my glasses and learned that it was a sparrow that he was eating with such satisfaction. In a short time I had caught another sparrow, which I placed in the same spot, concealed myself and watched. In a moment a Blue Jay swooped down, caught the sparrow's head in his beak and flew away with the bird. It was a most amazing sight, for although the sparrow was fully grown, the jay did not seem to find it a burden at all.

Permit me to add here an interesting observation regarding the English Sparrow. Recently I had one in my trap that flew against the wire with such force that it killed itself. I was about to remove it when I noticed another male that had entered the trap and was dragging the dead bird about. So I left it there just to see what the result would be. A short time later I went to the trap and found that the eyes of the dead bird had been pecked out, and further investigation showed that the head had been almost plucked bare of feathers and that the other bird had eaten the dead bird's brains. I have been having sparrows in my traps for years, but I never knew anything like this to happen before. I wonder if I had left the bird there if it would have been wholly devoured. The females did not take part in the cannibalistic feast and I wonder if the dead bird had been a female instead of a male, that it would have been eaten in the same manner. It came as a great surprise to me since the sparrows have always preferred the seeds in the trap to any other bait except nuts.

The most interesting returns that I have ever had, and some that prove that numbers of our summer grackles winter in Arkansas was shown last spring when I received word that two grackles banded the precedinig summer had been killed in that state. One was taken at Oil Trough and the other at Arkadelphia. In each case the man who took the bird had been attracted by the band on the bird's leg and had killed it to find out where the bird had come from. Two other banded grackles have been captured in Iowa; one at St. Olaf, about six miles from here, and the other at Logansport in Boone County. The bird captured at St. Olaf was sick when found, and the farmer who found it kept it until it had recovered, when he released it.

Some birds are so clever and amusing that one will get many a chuckle from banding. When first I began to trap chickadees, they used to frighten me to death by "playing dead". Other birds have done this also, the White-breasted Nuthatch, and the Slate-colored Junco. Even the Blue Jays will attempt it, but they cannot resist keeping one eye open just to see what one is about.

When the chickadees found that I had no intention of harming them, they became familiar and bit without the least hesitation, and if you think a chickadee cannot bite hard, just because of its small size, you have a very painful experience awaiting you. I will not soon forget one trick that one of these little rascals played on me. As I am very much handicapped by poor hearing, I cannot always tell if the bird in my hand is making an outcry or not. One day I caught a chickadee which looked as though he might be cheeping, so I put him close to my ear to find out, for generally the call is so shrill that I can hear it. He caught hold of my ear with his beak and would not let go and I had to have my mother rescue me.

Speaking of chickadees makes me think of one of my favorites. His number is 75647, and he is almost the first bird that I banded, lives here the year round, and is continually at one trap or the other. He is the bird who discovered the Everset trap and was the first to enter it. He must be over five years old, for he was an adult when first caught. May he live at least five years longer.

Birds resemble people in that they have many characteristics that distinguish the individuals. Bird friends are like our human friends, for while it is most interesting to make new acquaintances, how delightful it is to meet those old pals of long standing! I cannot describe the wonderful sensation it is to take a Bronzed Grackle, Catbird, Robin, or any other migratory bird from the trap, and to know that after making two long tiresome journeys he has come back safely to your yard, just because he knows that there is a feast spread there for him. You examine his band, you pat his head, and I for one cannot resist saying foolish little words of welcome. I do not know if he understands me or not, but he seems to realize that I will not harm him. I have a peculiar affection for the Catbirds; they are so shy and soft and confiding, and I have had more returns from this species than from any other migratory bird.

To those who feel more than a general interest, who feel a real and genuine affection for the birds, my advice is to start banding them. Maintain a trapping station, for there is nothing that gives me more pleasure than to hold a live bird in my hand, to feel it snuggle down confidingly, to study its plumage at close range, and then to see it fly away alive and happy. Although there is no library here for reference, I have a collection of bird books of my own, but I can truthfully say that I have learned more from my banding than I have ever learned from books.

ELKADER, IOWA.

NOTES FROM S. PRENTISS BALDWIN

There was no work done at the Baldwin trapping station at Thomasville, Georgia, this year, so no report can be made; the failure to carry on the work was due to illness, and it is hoped the station may be operated another year so there may be no serious break in the work there.

We are happy to say that Mr. T. Walter Weiseman, of Pittsburgh, is to assist Mr. Baldwin in the research during spring and summer at Hillcrest Farm near Cleveland, and will be watching those House Wrens every day. Mr. Weiseman has been in business in Pittsburgh, but found time to make some remarkable photographs and moving pictures of birds.

For some years he has aroused interest in Pittsburgh by conducting bird house contests through the *Pittsburgh Chronicle Telegraph*. Mr. Weiseman has recently retired from business with the intention of devoting his entire time to study of birds. He will also be prepared to give lectures illustrated by his pictures and movie films of birds.

Mr. Baldwin writes: "It is our hope that during the season we may make a very complete movie film of bird banding, giving a systematic story of it, and illustrating as fully as possible many forms of traps and methods.

"To that end we welcome any suggestions and will be glad to try out traps, and methods, with proper acknowledgment to those who give us assistance in making it a worth while story to interest the public in bird banding."

The Quail Study carried on at Thomasville by the U. S. Biological Survey, is in charge of Herbert L. Stoddard, assisted by Charles O. Handley. The report of progress of the first season has recently been published and will soon be placed in the hands of all members of the Inland Bird Banding Association. It is expected that all ornithologists who have suggestions to make, or who can assist in rousing interest in the Quail Study will communicate with Mr. Stoddard (address Beachton, Georgia). While this work was started by a few sportsmen at Thomasville, it has now become national in scope; many sportsmen from many states are contributing financially to the support of it; and it is intended that the investigation will be extended to other states so as to make a very complete study of the Bobwhite during the next few years.

Mr. Baldwin reports that Mr. Stoddard has been most successful in securing the co-operation not only of the owners of estates between Thomasville and Tallahassee but of the gamekeepers and employees, thus making sure of the most hearty assistance on the various plantations. Mr. Stoddard has recently trapped and banded five hundred quail on one estate, as part of the plan to discover how far the birds wander, and other information obtainable by banding.

Members of the Inland Bird Banding Association will take a fatherly interest in the quail investigation, not only because Mr. Stoddard, treasurer of our Association, was chosen to have charge of the investigation, and because banding will be used as the principal method, but also because the quail investigation was organized with the active help of the Inland Association, and plans for it developed with advice of the Inland Officers.

Prior to 1923 from time to time the ornithologists in charge of the Thomasville, Georgia, banding station had suggested to the quail sportsmen of the vicinity, that banding of quail be undertaken in order to find out some interesting facts about quail. In February of 1923 Mr. Charles M. Chapin and Mr. Arthur B. Lapsley, two of the quail sportsmen, became convinced of the value of such investigation, and wrote to the U. S. Biological Survey to ask co-operation, and at the same time invited Mr. Baldwin to suggest a plan for them.

This discussion was followed in April, 1923, by a luncheon given by Mr. Chapin in New York to decide whether a Committee of Sportsmen should be organized, and funds raised to carry out the plan.

At this meeting in New York Mr. Frederick C. Lincoln represented the U. S. Biological Survey; Mr. S. Prentiss Baldwin, representing the Inland Bird Banding Association, presented a plan; and Mr. John T. Nichols, from the

American Museum of Natural History attended, giving the weight of his opinion of the plan. Of quail sportsmen there were present: Col. L. S. Thompson, Arthur B. Lapsley, Charles M. Chapin, Percy Chubb, Robert H. McCurdy and Russel Perkins. The plan met with hearty approval, and a Committee was at once formed to raise funds and carry on the work. Col. L. S. Thompson was made Chairman, and Mr. Arthur B. Lapsley, Secretary.

The quail sportsmen of the country owe much thanks to these two men; to Mr. Lapsley who at first saw the possibilities and undertook the difficult task of interesting others in the enterprise; and to Col. Thompson who has been most generous in offering a house, The Hall, Meridian Road, Beachton, Georgia, with excellent accommodations in every way, in which headquarters for the work has been established, and who continues to give it much practical assistance and backing without counting the cost.

Two days after this meeting in April, 1923, Mr. Baldwin, by request of the Committee, met Dr. E. W. Nelson at the Cosmos Club in Washington and a definite plan and program of work was arranged; the work to be done under complete direction of the U. S. Biological Survey.

During the summer of 1923 the Committee procured the underwriting of sufficient funds to carry on the work, for three years, and arrangements with the Survey were completed so that by January of 1924, Herbert L. Stoddard was selected by the Survey to have charge in the field, and with Charles O. Handley as Assistant. The plan calls for the most thorough and complete study ever made of a game bird, taking advantage of every modern method; and while the main part of the study of habits is to be made in Georgia, the Biological Survey intends that the study shall extend to other states, and receive the support and co-operation of other states.

Members of the Inland Bird Banding Association should have received copies of the first preliminary report on the work, and we expect them to take special interest in assisting to make the investigation a success, by making it known to persons who may be interested and securing their active participation. As a bird banding proposition it is certainly unique.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

MYSTERY BANDS.—Almost every season the Biological Survey receives at least one band of unknown origin. Usually these are obtained from waterfowl and they are generally impossible to trace, although it is believed that most of such banded birds either are escaped decoys from shooting clubs or stock birds from game farms.

A Bronzed Grackle (*Quiscalus q. aeneus*), captured at the banding station of Dr. A. R. Shearer at Mount Belvieu, Texas, on March 31, 1925, carried an aluminum band with the number 37 embossed thereon. Straightened out the band measures about one and one-eighth inches in length and it is three-sixteenths of an inch in width. It is supplied with a locking device somewhat similar to that used on the No. 6 bands issued by the Biological Survey.

It is evident that the band was attached by someone who maintained at least some interest in birds, and as the return may be of particular interest, it is hoped that some reader of the WILSON BULLETIN may be able to supply in-

formation relative to the date and place of banding. The band was forwarded to Washington by Dr. Shearer, who replaced it with Biological Survey band 308970.—Frederick C. Lincoln, *Biological Survey, Washington, D. C.*

Blue Jay Notes.—Shortly after dawn each morning Blue Jays 278240 and 352485 take a position in a lilac bush ten feet from the house and call loudly until their breakfast is ready. Blue Jays 278230 to 278235, inclusive, who first arrived at this station December 7, only gained the right to feed after a determined resistance on the part of banded jays who resented the newcomers. When Blue Jay 352483, engaged in opening a nut, looks around, English Sparrows hovering in the background quickly move away. Blue Jay 278227 tries to knock down the drop traps before feeding and usually does so. However the services of a trap tester of this kind in trying out new traps is not to be undervalued and he (or she) has come to expect the special tidbit given as a reward. Blue Jay 352483 protested loudly when banded, flew directly to the bird bath, bathed and resumed his interrupted meal at the traps. Thirty-two jays have been banded since October 12, but as no birds are trapped who appear shy or timid, there are always a number of unbanded birds around. After banding each bird is given some reward, and four times out of five, flies to a tree close by and starts to eat.

Part of the fascination of banding consists in the fact that notes of this kind may be easily proved or disproved.—E. C. Hoffman, *Lakewood, Ohio.*

Caution in Banding.—The station at Waukegan, Illinois, had an annoying experience with soft aluminum bands in the days of early banding, especially with the grackles and Red-winged Blackbirds, and later with the Blue Jays and grosbeaks. The old No. 3 bands were made of very soft aluminum, and these birds with the heavy beaks picked the bands and pinched them tight on their legs; and the tighter the band became, the more they pinched it, until it practically shut off all circulation. Some of the birds were re-trapped, and in some cases the foot below the band was greatly enlarged, and in one case, we were quite sure that the foot was lost altogether. Today the aluminum is tempered and much heavier, but in the case of grackles, jays and grosbeaks, we always use a No. 4 band, which is much heavier than No. 3, and lap it a trifle to reduce the size.

Improving Band Numbers.—You have probably experienced trouble in reading the numbers on the bright and shiny bands; it is very hard and trying on the eyes. A very good way to remedy this trouble has been suggested. That is to take some very thin black paint and rub over the bands while they are on the wire, being careful not to get paint on the inside of the band; after the paint has gotten into all the figures, wipe the paint off again with a cloth. This will wipe all the surface clean and leave some of the paint in the figures, which will make them show up much more plainly, and relieve the strain on the eyes.

Trap Making.—In our last issue there was a warning by Professor William Rowan, of the University of Alberta, in regard to dangers of trapping birds in traps that had sharp wires projecting inside so as to injure the birds. A great deal of such difficulty can be overcome by using a little care in making the seams. Just follow the tinner's method; if you have no iron block like he uses, simply use a common brick and a wooden mallet. Put the brick inside of the trap against the seam and beat it smooth with the mallet. If you will practice this a few times, also the art of folding your seams, that is, bring the two edges

together and fold them over twice, then pound the seams together with the wooden mallet, you will find that it will aid you in making your trap, and make a very neat, smooth seam, one which will save the birds from injury as well as your own hands. All bird banders should carefully inspect their traps and make sure there are no cut wires projecting inward before setting the trap.

ENTRANCE FUNNELS FOR TRAPS.—From the numerous questions that arise the entrance to traps seems to give the most trouble. The front of the funnel seems to be understood by most of the bird banders, but the inner end is the one that gives the trouble, especially the matter of guard wires. It is a very tedious task to put on enough small wires, so that they may be woven solidly to the fabric to make the proper guard for ordinary trapping. This entrance should not be larger than four inches square. One of the simplest methods of making these guard wires is to use a strip of one-half inch mesh hardware cloth that is galvanized after weaving, which provides soldering of each wire at every contact. Cut a strip about five inches wide and twelve inches long; then cut the first strand between each of the cross wires on one of the twelve inch sides. Turn the piece around and cut the first five strands between each cross wire. This should leave three of the long wires firmly soldered to all the cross wires. Now take a gasoline blow torch, or use a gas stove burner and melt off all of the cut wires. It is not necessary to cut them but you will find that they can be removed much easier. Use another piece of wire or metal to scrape the free end clear of solder and galvanized mixture. This strip can be bent around the funnel entrance in the shape of letter U and will give you a number of free ends of wire two and one-half to three inches long, with length about one inch at the other end to weave into the fabric, and make the whole solid. Then take a brick and wooden mallet and pound all the joints smooth.

Another way of making a funnel entrance is to purchase a gutter strainer, the kind the hardware store sells to put in the down spout to keep leaves from choking up the rain pipes. You can cut out the back end and open up along one side if necessary and make a very good trap entrance. Try making just a small cage of screen with a gutter strainer for entrance.

HOUSE SPARROW CROSS BILL.—On Christmas Day of 1924, the trapping station at Waukegan, Illinois, received an unusual present. The pleasure came in the way of a female House Sparrow, whose upper mandible crossed the lower one, projecting about one-quarter of an inch beyond. This oddity was carefully housed in a nice little cage for future observation. But one can imagine the surprise a week later when a close investigation showed that the tip of the upper mandible had dropped off, and was no longer than the lower, although both were slightly crossed. The January 20, 1925, inspection showed that the mandibles had increased in length, so they crossed each other at least one-eighth of an inch. On May 1 the upper mandible again had grown and was at least one-fourth of an inch longer than the lower. It is hoped we may continue these observations.

We are starting a study on deformities and regeneration of bird beaks. Each one of the trappers can aid us by watching for any irregularities and reporting them to us at once. During the winter we have kept close observation of the beaks of the English Sparrows that have been trapped and have noticed that there is an apparent scaling or regeneration during th months of December, January, February, and March.—W. I. L.

A REPORT FROM ALABAMA FOR THE SPRING OF 1925.—The bird banding work at the Alabama Polytechnic Institute, at Auburn, has not been as successful as we had hoped. The number of birds banded, 141, exceeded that of last year, but fell short of the number banded two years ago, when the number was over 500. This year the weather has been so mild that a large amount of food has been available for the birds, and they have not gone to the traps. Our banded birds this year included twenty species, with the White-throated Sparrow leading in number. This species has not previously been banded here. Likewise the following species (with number of each shown in parentheses) banded this year were new on our list: Slate-colored Junco (4), Carolina Wren (4), Savannah Sparrow (6), Purple Grackle (9), Red-winged Blackbird (1), Dickcissel (2), Towhee (4), Song Sparrow (1), Sparrow Hawk (1), and Chimney Swift (10). The Pine Siskin and Pine Warbler, which have always been common heretofore, were not even seen this year. Thirty-one Cowbirds were banded, however.

Cowbirds and grackles were last seen on April 14, being very common up to that time. The White-throated Sparrow was also common this spring, and was last heard on April 24. The White-crowned Sparrow was seen for the first time at Auburn on April 13. During the last week in March and first week in April large numbers of Savannah Sparrows were scattered over Auburn, but their stay was short.—Henry G. Good, Assistant Professor of Entomology and Zoology, in charge of bird banding.

Mr. H. L. Stoddard, in charge of investigations on the Bob-white in southern Georgia, in a recent report enumerates some of the animal nuisances which they encountered at their quail traps. Squirrels, cotton-rats, mice, and numerous small seed-eating birds entered the traps and consumed the food. But the razor-backed hogs upset the traps!

Prof. Gayle B. Pickwell, of Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, reports catching six Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, in a creeper trap at one time.

If the bird banders will follow the order of A. O. U. Check List when they are making out a report, it will be a great help to those trying to make comparison of the work.

We wish to request that bird banders make a special effort to band more birds that go to South America; especially the Chimney Swifts, shore birds, and Bobolinks. We are in hope that eventually some Chimney Swifts will disclose their winter habits.

The Inland Association is very anxious to have the gull and tern banding campaign continued. If any of our readers know of some of the nesting sites that have not been banded in the past, please report them; also aid us in getting more volunteers for the coming season's work.