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E B B A N E W S

Eastern Bird-Banding Association News Letter

MAY AND JUNE
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THE EASTERN BIRD-BANDING ASSOCIATION

The Editor of Bird-Banding Journal, Mr. E. Alexander Bergstrom, then presented a paper, "Notes on Slate-Colored Junco," which is to appear in an early issue of Bird Banding. Mr. Bergstrom also stated that he still had available copies of the British Trap Guide which members could purchase from him at a cost of 60¢.

"Banding in Georgia" was the title of the paper presented by Mr. Frederick V. Hebard. Mr. Hebard stated that though he had banded few birds, he had been able to establish hitherto unverified data on the movement of Cardinals.

The Report of the Nominating Committee (Mr. Beecher S. Bowdish, Chairman, Chandler Robbins, William Pepper, Orville W. Crowder, Richard B. Fischer) was then presented by Mr. Bowdish. The Officers and new members of the Council were elected as follows:

President, Raymond J. Middleton
 First Vice President, Leroy Wilcox
 Second Vice President, Richard O. Bender
 Third Vice President, Joseph M. Cadbury
 Secretary, Frank Frazier
 Treasurer, Merrill Wood
 Council Members, Mrs. H. G. McEntee, Maurice
 Broun, Arthur H. Fast

A change in the By-Laws and Constitution, so that the Editor of EBBA News be appointed by the Council instead of being elected by the membership, was then introduced and passed.

Other resolutions passed by the meeting were:

1. Resolved: that the Association deeply regrets that Mr. Geoffrey Gill feels he must resign, but understands his reasons for doing so; and further Resolved: that the greatest appreciation for his highly valued services during his long years as Editor and Officer be expressed to Mr. Gill, together with sympathy for the accident to him and his family and warmest wishes for a full and speedy recovery.

2. An expression of appreciation and thanks (moved and seconded by many members) for the leadership and untiring service of the retiring President, Mr. Groskin, was passed with acclaim.
3. That the Association extend its appreciation to the Local Committee on Arrangements, Mr. Frank Frazier, Chairman, for its work in planning and arranging the meeting.
4. That the Association extend its thanks to the American Museum of Natural History for acting as host to the Annual Meeting.

After a brief social period, the Association reconvened at the Henry Hudson Hotel for a delicious dinner.

After dinner, Angelo D'Angelo showed his extraordinary motion pictures in color of "Bird Life in Northeastern New Jersey."

On Sunday, March 30th, EBBA members visited the New Jersey banding stations of Mrs. H. G. McEntee, Mrs. John Y. Dater, Mrs. Marie Dumont (where Mr. and Mrs. Dumont provided coffee, cakes and other goodies to add to the box lunches), and Mr. Beecher Bowdish. At each of these banding stations EBBA members saw a wide variety of traps and plantings of trees and shrubs suitable for attracting many different species.

Frank Frazier, Secretary

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PLASTIC NECK-BANDS ON CANADA GEESE

Canada geese have been banded with plastic collars during the past winter at the Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge located on the outer banks of the North Carolina coast. Collar bands of red, green, yellow, and white, have been used and can

be readily observed with field glasses at distances of a quarter of a mile. The colors represent individual trapping sites at Pea Island. If anyone has been fortunate enough to see one of these marked geese, please report the place and date of observation to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Patuxent Research Refuge, Laurel, Maryland.

Though the marking of waterfowl with plastic collars has been used in the middle west by Messrs. H. H. Dill, L. R. Jahn, J. B. Gallup and others, it has not been tried previously on the Atlantic seaboard. This neck-banding of birds at Pea Island is part of an over-all study on ecology and disease of Canada geese in which some 500 geese have been repeatedly trapped approximately 900 times. Plastic collars are not a substitute for the conventional aluminum leg band. Rather it is a temporary method for marking birds for sight observations. The length of time that these neck-bands stay on geese depends largely on the individual. Some collars last for only a few hours while others stay on for two months or longer.

During the investigations at Pea Island specific efforts were made to perfect collar banding of Canada geese. Leather-like plastic material was used. The most suitable width was one and a half to one and three quarters inches. Collars of greater width sometimes irritated the neck. The length of the collar-band varied in accordance to the size of the neck of the goose, but it should be loose enough to allow a rod seven-eighths of an inch in diameter to pass freely under the band without causing pressure on the goose neck. This will allow ample space for passage of food.

Records thus far obtained indicate that the geese from Pea Island are following the Atlantic seaboard on their northward migration.

John H. Steenis
Fish and Wildlife Service
Patuxent Research Refuge
Laurel, Maryland

* * * * *

A very informative and interesting letter from Doris Huestis Speirs, Cobble Hill, R. R. No. 2, Pickering, Ontario, reads as follows:

"A popular belief, disseminated by noted bird authorities, is that the sexes of the Evening Grosbeak are similar in juvenal plumage and resemble the adult female. Commencing with Dr. Dwight's well-known work on the "Sequences of Plumages and Moults of Passerine Birds" (1900), on through Ridgway (1901), Forbush (1929), the National Geographic Society's "Book of Birds" (1937), etc. the fancy has persisted. In the April 1952 issue of EBBA NEWS again this belief is printed.

"In THE WILSON BULLETIN in 1926 Mr. M. J. Magee of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, called attention to the difference in the plumage of juvenal male and female Evening Grosbeak, and in the BULLETIN OF THE NORTH-EASTERN BIRD-BANDING ASSOCIATION in 1929 the plumages are described. He banded great numbers of this species in the same locality in which the Chippewa Indian boy shot the "Paush-cundamc" in 1823; and among the birds banded by Mr. Magee were a few young Evening Grosbeaks.

"In looking over these young birds,' he writes, 'I made notes that some looked like young males and some like young females.'" Because Jcrathan Dwight had stated in his paper that the sexes were similar in juvenal plumage 'For this reason,' wrote Mr. Magee 'I thought the difference was more imaginary than real ... "Two juvenal females banded were recorded simply as "young." 'However, he writes, 'when I got the young male on July 29th, I saw at once that the juvenal plumages of the sexes were very different, as noted below' and then follows the first published description of the juvenal plumage of male and female Evening Grosbeak of the Eastern race, Hesperiphona vespertina vespertina. That was in 1929.

"The original fancy persisted however, and was quoted in various publications. And so another voice was heard and the facts presented -- this time from the west. In THE AUK of April, 1939, Major Allan Brooks describes the juvenal plumage of the male Evening Grosbeak from specimens of the Western race, Hesperiphona

vespertina brooksi, comparing the male with the female. Juvenal birds of the eastern and western races are very similar, and so the clear description given by Brooks might be of help to bird banders:

"The body plumage is more richly colored than that of the juvenal female, more suffused with olive or yellow and generally darker and less gray; there is usually a more pronounced dark malar stripe. But the main difference is in the wing which follows the pattern of the adult male and not that of the female. The wing is black, without the three series of white markings that are found on the primaries and secondaries of females of all ages. But the tertials and outermost secondaries are white as in the adult male, forming a conspicuous patch; the tertials are more or less tinged with brown as in most second-plumaged males and usually have a narrow black inner border; all the feathers of this white patch are narrowly edged with primrose yellow. The tail in most individuals is solid black like the adult males, but some show faint white tips to the inner webs of the outermost rectrices; these do not take the form of the large white spots found in females of all ages. The rump is dull buffy olive and the upper tail-coverts are black, sometimes with black tips.

"It will be seen that the wings and tail are essentially colored as in the adult male, the five innermost secondary coverts are pale yellow or white, narrowly edged with primrose yellow, forming a patch confluent with that on the tertials and secondaries just as in the adult male and very conspicuous in flight. The bill is dusky olive."

"I have seen young birds of the eastern race being fed by their parents in Ontario, and even at that age the two sexes are readily distinguishable. Bird banders need have no fear that they might be sexing the grosbeaks incorrectly. Those birds that look like males are males and Evening Grosbeaks that look like females, are females.

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* * * * *

A correction - - - In order that banding records may be kept straight we wish to correct an error made in the April issue of EBBA NEWS. On page 4 we gave an address as follows: Mrs. Patience Larlee, Plaster Rock, New Brunswick, N. J. This should read "New Brunswick, Canada."

* * * * *

We quote the following letter received from Mr. G. Hapgood Parks, Hartford, Conn. - "On December 16, 1951 we trapped an olivaceous Purple Finch and banded it with No. 50-64757.

"On December 23 this bird repeated twice, and again on December 31.

"Upon the occasion of each of these captures the bird flew away normally when released, but on February 22, the next time it repeated, it fell to the ground from my hand and made no attempt at all to fly.

"From February 22 until March 7 the bird was kept in captivity. During this time it ate normally and was quite tame. On March 7 it was released.* It flew first to a hedge and then, with some difficulty, into a tree and disappeared.

"Today, March 24, 1952, the bird repeated again. Upon being released it flew away normally.

"*During its period of captivity, the bird was not observed to use its wings even once prior to the day upon which it was released."

SHOCK DEATHS

From Dr. C. Brooke Worth, Bangalcrel, Mysore, India comes the following:

"In reference to the communications from Mr. W. M. Davidson of Orlando, Florida, and from Mr. G. Hapgood Parks, on the subject of "shock deaths" in trapped birds, I feel impelled to add my name to the list of those who have been baffled by the same phenomenon. Some years ago I made post mortem examinations of several dozen bird carcasses that either died of shock at my banding station or were sent to me by other banders following death from the same cause. The most characteristic finding in almost all of the birds was the appearance of the intestine. This would be absolutely black, practically throughout its extent from stomach to cloaca. The contents were found to be a viscid material resembling semi-digested or decomposed blood. I have not heard of any explanation for such a condition. Since "shock" occurs in only a small percentage of individuals of a given species, it is possible that the intestinal condition may have pre-existed, the bird being already sick when trapped. This has always seemed to me a promising topic for investigation by a comparative pathologist."

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

At the time of our annual convention in New York on March 30, the resignation of the Editor of EBBA NEWS, Richard O. Bender, was received and accepted with regret. His business taking him away much of the time it was now impossible to get the monthly issues out promptly. Mr. Bender has given of his time freely for several years and we are indebted to him for his efforts.

The present Editor and I have agreed to combine the May and June numbers in one larger issue so as to give you a full report of the meeting and outing. The details arranged by the Committee for the convention were well planned and everything was done to make it a success. The attendance was excellent and the Committee is to be congratulated for their work.

After much letter writing your Officers and the Council have secured a new Editor for EBBA NEWS. He is Albert Conway, R. D. #4, Easton, Pa. Mr. Conway is a Fellow of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club of Philadelphia and has been banding for many years. He is now teaching at Lafayette College and is a thorough bird man in every way. He is well qualified for the job of Editor.

I am sure that I may speak for the Officers and members of the Council in asking each of you to give your support to our new Editor. He begins with the July issue.

We are asking each of you to look over your banding activities and make up some note from your records, no matter how small this item may be, possibly some interesting return or unusual recovery, and send this to Mr. Conway. What you send him determines what he makes out of our monthly paper.

May I also extend greetings to you as we start another year. Our membership covers a wide area, over many states and parts of Canada. Let's put so many good things about banding in EBBA NEWS that we keep closer together and almost forget that we are actually many miles apart, in many cases.

Most cordially yours,

Raymond J. Middleton, President

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Your Editor wishes to take this opportunity to thank all of those members who contributed news items at various times and to say that the Editorship has been a very pleasant experience. A final reminder-send your news items to Dr. Conway and keep them flowing.

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