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E B B A N E W S

The Eastern Bird-Banding Association News Letter

September 1952

"Let Us Band Together"

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NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

The response to the questionnaire enclosed in the August issue has been most gratifying. Nearly fifty replies have been received to date, and each mail brings an additional response or two. Those members who have not yet had the opportunity to prepare their form are urged to do so as soon as possible.

The questionnaires are proving of value in two ways. First, they provide a wealth of information about the members of EBBA themselves which will be of invaluable assistance to your Editor. Second, the specific comments directed toward EBBA NEWS will aid in planning future issues. To each member who has submitted his questionnaire, the Editor sends personal and heartfelt thanks! Incidentally, various facts gleaned from an analysis of these questionnaires will provide interesting material for use in EBBA NEWS, so actually, this project will serve a dual role.

* * * *

Mr. Harry T. Davis of the North Carolina State Museum at Raleigh suggests that it might be interesting to publish in the NEWS a summary of the banding of young colonial birds along the east coast each year. The Editor agrees, and he requests that each member who has done any colonial banding this past season drop him a postal, listing the following: location (state and county), date, species, number of young banded, and estimated size of colony. Try to get this card off by September 30 at latest. Also, don't forget that schedules for such birds were due in the banding office September 1. Have you sent yours in yet?

* * * *

Data for the Robin symposium, announced last issue and scheduled for the November issue, should be sent to the Editor's wife. It is hoped that material for this purpose will be in her hands by October 15 at the latest. Even if you think that your data on this species is inconsequential, please send it in, especially since this is a species which is not banded in the large numbers characteristic of the Junco and White-throated Sparrow featured in earlier symposia.

Reference to the White-throated Sparrow symposium (March 1950) and the Junco symposium (May-June 1951), will give many members an

idea of the type of information which is needed. For the benefit of newer members, we shall summarize the types of data wanted:

- 1) Recoveries, giving exact locations of banding and recovery, exact dates, and any other data available.
- 2) Returns and repeats at banding station.
- 3) Weights and measurements, and age and sex determination data.
- 4) Infestation with parasites; illnesses and other defects.
- 5) Types of traps used; bait preferred; locations of traps; behavior at traps.

In other words, practically anything pertaining to this species should be worked up and sent in. The more complete the information received, the better will be the resulting summary. Remember this is a cooperative project, the success of which depends on each bander!

* * * *

Material for use in EBBA NEWS has been coming in a little more rapidly of late, and it is expected that with the October issue we shall be able to add another sheet of four pages to each issue. However, the continuance of this policy will depend on your regular contributions. It is likely that the innermost sheet will be done by a process other than straight mimeographing so that it will permit the reproduction of trap plans to illustrate the series on traps which we promised in the August number.

* * * *

WHAT IS THE SMALLEST RELATIVE SIZE OF AN INFERTILE EGG?

by Harold B. Wood, M.D.

On a banding expedition with James Stanley Quickmire of the South Jersey Audubon Center near Cape May Court House, New Jersey, I was taken by canoe to the sand flats below Stone Harbor. These tidewater flats are as extensive as the mudflats below Beach Haven, New Jersey, but at the time they had a different avian population. Over the minute sand dunes about a hundred Black Skimmers hovered noisily while we banded several nestlings.

In the same locality, many Common Terns had scooped out concavities for their nests. One nest was found to contain what should be represented by one and one tenth eggs! One of the eggs was of normal coloration and size, measuring 1.75 by 1.25 inches. The other egg was without doubt an infertile dud; it was spherical in shape, with no suggestion of any pointing, and about one third of an inch in diameter. Its ground color was normal, and the brownish blotches were of the same color as the normal egg but somewhat smaller in size.

Is this the record for the smallest relative size for a 'dud' bird egg? ---3016 North Second St., Harrisburg, Penna.

* * * *

BIRD BANDING PROBLEMS IN INDIA

by C. Brooke Worth, M.D.

(Those American banders who think that English Sparrows or Pigeons make banding almost impossible should be thankful that they do not have to contend with the problems faced by Brooke Worth, former President of E.B.B.A. who is now with the Rockefeller Foundation, stationed in India.--AEC)

Not much bird banding has been done in India because of the difficulty in maintaining trapping stations. I have not even attempted to establish a bird feeder at my home in Bangalore because of the following problems.

If American bird banders think English Sparrows are a nuisance, they should see the crows in this country. There are two species: the larger Jungle Crow that is a solid glistening black; and the smaller House Crow, duller black with a grey mantle. Both crows are common in almost every city, usually existing in enormous numbers and boldly marauding everywhere. In some places you cannot sit in the garden for afternoon tea because the crows and kites dive down and snatch food from the table or even out of your hand. They enter kitchens to steal any exposed eatables that are left about. One day a crow ate the eggs in my pigeon coop.

The common Pariah Kite is also a ubiquitous marauder. Imagine, then, setting out food to attract smaller birds. The food, whatever

sort it may be, simply disappears. I have no doubt that if a small bird entered a trap to feed, a crow would follow it in and eat both the food and the bird. Ants would be another gigantic problem, provided bait remained in one place long enough.

The small birds likely to be trapped are mostly insectivorous, so that grain would not be a suitable attractant. One is therefore left with only a single choice, namely the water-drip mechanism. At our bird bath in front of the house I have had many visitors that came to drink and bathe. These include kites, both species of crows, and Common Mynahs. Other kinds have been most infrequent: the prize was an immature male Paradise Flycatcher that came only once.

During the long dry season, water becomes scarce in the surrounding country, and I have then seen occasional gatherings of bathing and drinking birds at small seepages or trickles of water. Sometimes the water was foul, but its motion seemed to entice the birds, just as in the case of water-drip traps. The sorts of birds in these parties have included various babblers, bulbuls, mynahs, and so forth.

Hence it appears that the future of bird banding in India will be centered on the development of moving-water baits. Possibly, large house-type traps will be advantageous, to give small birds a chance when crows invade the enclosure. A device that would exclude or deter crows, without rendering it impossible to trap other large birds, will also be necessary.

The day of bird banding in India is remote for more than the above reasons. As yet there are only a handful of amateur ornithologists in this country, since the many current problems of the population leave no time for the development of such refined hobbies as bird watching. This note is written merely to suggest the difficulties that might be encountered in any attempt to establish a banding program in India and, perhaps, in other eastern tropical countries.

--3 St. Marks Road, Bangalore, Mysore, India

* * * *

INTERESTING RETURNS AND RECOVERIES

A Brown Towhee (*Pipilo fuscus*) banded near Watsonville, California, Jan. 13, 1947, by W. M. Davidson, was found dead near the place of banding, May 18, 1952. The bird was in at least its sixth year. Mr. Davidson had the unusual experience of being handed the report of capture while on a recent visit to the banding office.

A White-throated Sparrow (47-119785) banded as an immature on Sept. 28, 1948, at Quebec Zoological Gardens, Charlesbourg, Montmorency County, Quebec, Canada, by Raymond Cayouette, was retrapped by EBBA President Raymond J. Middleton, at Norristown, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, on Mar. 4, 1952.

A Slate-colored Junco (47-81958) banded as an adult male on May 1, 1950, at St. Romuald, Lewis County, Quebec, Canada, by Raymond Roberge, was retrapped at Easton, Northampton County, Pennsylvania, Mar. 30, 1952, by Mr. and Mrs. Albert E. Conway.

President Middleton also reports that this year a pair of Crested Flycatchers again nested in the same box in which they nested last year. He says that this is the seventh time (in thirty years) that he has had both members of a mated pair return after migration.

* * * *

CHICKADEE MIGRATION, 1951-52
by Eleanor E. Dater

The fall of 1951 gave us a migration of Black-capped Chickadees from North to South. This was noted by many people, but no one mentioned their return this Spring. A check in Bent's life histories showed that there are very few records (two around Ithaca, New York) of banded Chickadees migrating any distance, 3 to 20 miles.

On April 12 of this year (1952), I took a migratory Chickadee (50-65540) which proved to have been banded on March 25, 1952, at the Dumont Banding Station at Pequannock, Morris County, New Jersey, a distance of approximately 18 air miles from Ramsey, Bergen County, New Jersey.

Are there any other banding recoveries of the 1951-52 Chickadee migration?--Mrs. John Y. Dater, 259 Grove St., Ramsey, N.J.

* * * *

We welcome the following new members of EBBA:

Mr. John McDermott, 71 Lotus Lane, Paramus, N.J.
Mr. Lewis W. Fyle, 330 S. Burrows St., State College, Pa.
Mr. A. C. Burrell, c/o Dean R. W. Holland, Univ. of Chattanooga, Chattanooga 3, Tenn.
Mrs. Ernest E. Wanck, 5 Davidson Ave., Ramsey, N.J.
Dr. John O. Watkins, 359 Pine St., Spartanburg, S.C.
Mr. George Needham, R.D. 2, Coatesville, Pa.
Mrs. John E. Bacon, 74 Taylor Road, Hamburg, N.Y.
Mrs. Bradley Fisk, 20 Barkley Place, Buffalo, N.Y.
Mr. William H. Jenkins, Jr., 318 Broad St. Elmer, N.J.
Mr. Gordon L. Hight, Jr., Simpson Grocery Co., Rome, Ga.

NEW ADDRESSES

Mr. Walter B. Sabin, R.D. 2, Altamont, N.Y.
Mr. Ted Griso, 64 Coe Bldg., 15 Cross St., Bangor, Me.

* * * *

William Pepper, 20 E. Bells Mill Road, Philadelphia 18, Pa., writes: "The following relates to a Common Tern banded near Margate, New Jersey, as a nestling on June 22, 1941, by my father. (Dr. William Pepper, Sr., late Dean of the Univ. of Penna. Medical School--Ed.)

"On September 19, 1950, I received a regular form letter stating that on Sept. 3, 1950, Mr. R. C. English, 819 Second St., Northfield, N.J., wrote that 'I had a strike and lost the fish but on my hook was a tag 40-354374'. This was in the vicinity of Lakes Bay, Atlantic Co., N.J.

"Could a bander call this a nine-year recovery, or had a fish an aluminum-capped tooth? It's a good story even if a little old in telling."

Yes, Bill, we agree it's a good story!

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