

EBBA NEWS

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Chips and Chats

It isn't as baffling to you (out there) as it is to the Editor why our news-letter has appeared for three successive issues without proper "date line" and heading. Each time in your Editor's prepared "copy" the designation of month and year has gone down to the printer's at the top of Sheet One, but for some reason the date-line has never been set in type right. (Up to now the Editor has not had advance proof-sheets to read before publication. He hopes to bring this reasonable thing about!) It appears that patience is as great a virtue in editing as it is in bird-banding.

(N.B. — This is Sept. 1949 copy.)

However, there is a song in our hearts despite all this. It's a song whose text arrived on a postal yesterday. From Tampa. Anonymous. Set it to your own music:

*A rugged and versatile bander
Set a trap for a dandy old gander
"A goose with a band,"
(he confided) "is grand,
"But a band on a gander is
grander."*

Following addresses are wrong, and NEWS copies come back to Editor (extra charge 2¢). Anyone know correct addresses? — Mr. James McKell, III, Sagan Rd., New Hope, Penna. Mr. W. O. Astle, 45-64-158th St., Flushing, N.Y. Mr. F. V. Crich, 114 St. Germaine Ave., Toronto, Ontario. Mr. Russell C. Richards (from 2 addresses), and: Mr. Gerald T. Rogers, 13 "B" St., Perris, California.

Stephan C. Fordham, Jr., our Member who helps run the State's famous Game Farm up at Delmar, N.Y., has just been down to Patuxent Research Refuge (F&WL Reservation half-way betwixt Baltimore and Washington) and he says a lot of us banders surely would like to visit this interesting place if they knew more about it. The F&WL offices at Laurel, Md. will send you an interesting folder if you write for it. (And this folder also tells you how to get there.)

If you send the Editor a Return-paid post-card, he will send you the names and addresses of a few fellow members of EBBA who live in your vicinity. — Don't all write at once!

It won't be this Editor, but it might be our President Groskin who starts and manages this all-member petition of ours to the F&WLS (or Dep't. of the Interior) asking for a special commemorative postage stamp publicizing Banding. We need a slogan like: "Is That Bird Banded? Report number to F&WLS!" — Or something. Editor believes we can put it over!

I notice a new book: 'Bird Hiking' by Leon A. Housman, published by Rutgers University Press. Says "A sound primer for nature walkers... concerned mainly with birds, but it is inclusive enough to offer tips on allied matters. Ill. by drawings." Write Rutgers University. (—But I don't know its price.)

Mrs. George Wells (R. 1, Elmira, N.Y.) just reports that in Feb.-March before last she banded 48 Tree Sparrows, and the following Winter she had 13 returns. A high percent!

Dr. Fluch (of Lambertville, N. J. — as if you didn't know!) writes "Complete diagram and description of a "new" (?) trap, the 'Australian Crow Trap' is in 'Wildlife Leaflet No 172' to be had from F&WL Service. It's a large house-trap; has caught oodles of Starlings around Washington. I always have wondered how I could make my house-trap 'automatic'. — This Leaflet 172 was issued in 1945; and the banders are just hearing about it! Why wasn't this trap included in the old Manual; will it be featured in the new one??" (NEWS can't very well reproduce diagrams and drawings in its present state of publication. — So, send for the Leaflet.)

And his letter brings up another point. The Editor, therefore asks: Are Starlings particularly difficult to get repeats on? Are they too wise-and-wary?

Make a note! Pres. H. Elliott McClure, of WBBA (Bakersfield, Cal.) writes in to suggest that no EBBA member "traveling Highway 99 in California should fail to stop at Modesto to see the banding station of Irl Rogers. A bander with novel ideas. His traps are of finest workmanship; his gadgets amaze us... builds aerial platforms in trees to trap tree-top birds... has even water traps in elevators which he raises to high levels. Irl is the bird-banding genius of the West!"

And further on McClure says: "of all ornithologically interested people, banders should be the most enthusiastic, as they alone have the privilege of handling and examining wild birds!" (Are all of us enthusiastic enough? Well, few of "us" send much of any mail in to the EBBA EDITOR. — If that's any gauge.)

McClure again: "I believe a bander should band every bird he can get his hands on; but that he should specialize on species he can get in numbers (or even hard-to-get forms) so as to secure valuable information not available to any method except banding. Michener's classic work in plumage changes of House Finch exemplifies this. . . Some Problems could be, for example: a study of blood parasites (several parasitologists, including Dr. Carlton Herman, are anxious to get blood-smears from wild birds). And plumage studies in any species. And studies of banded nestlings re-trapped to learn dispersal-rates in their breeding territories. And studies of nuptial fidelity in any species or group of species. Problems presented to the bander are limited only by his own ingenuity." (And enthusiasm, the Editor chips in.) —An inspiring letter!

(Who knows Dr. Herman's address?)

Speaking, as we were two issues back, about singing female birds, here's another piece of good research and information: The Wilson Bulletin re-prints a folder called 'A Singing Female Wood Thrush' (from June '48 Bulletin). Have a letter (somewhere, lost in files!) about female Catbird song. —And lady House Wrens do! —Go on, send in your observations on female songsters!

"This may be old stuff to you", writes Mrs. Dater of Ramsey, N. J., "but I feel more publicity need be given to following info from Mr. Seth Low" (F&WLS): "I use Size Two bands on Towhees (2 is stronger, besides, than 1A). Prefer No. 1 on Song Sparrows, though many prefer 1B. Some cooper-

ators cut No. 2 down for Towhees, Grosbeaks, etc., but I don't believe this necessary." Mrs. Dater thinks No. 3 goes for Thrashers, and No. 2 for Catbirds. . . She advocates in her letter using a Gem razor-blade to open a band on a bird. —OOOH! This sounds dangerous to EBBAED. He uses a tiny pliers whose biting-edges are at right angles to the handles and open-and-close just like your own set of false teeth. Press edges together along closed ends of band, and band is wedged open at once. To open new bands Ed. uses tiny pliers with two tapering, cone-shaped "jaws". —Don't know technical name of either pliers. Sorry!

Dated Aug. 29, comes a letter from Parks of Hartford, in which he says: "We've banded 1581 Evening Grosbeaks here. These birds have already provided us with 84 records ranging from returns to recoveries and from New Jersey to New Brunswick, Can." This surely is something! —What's the important story you've learned thereby, Parks?

"Thought you might be interested in a recovery made on a Tree Sparrow last Winter," writes Oakleigh Thorne of Millbrook, N. Y. "No.47-24324 banded by Bristow at Cedars, Del. February 6, 1948. Definitely established there in mid-winter; I caught it 200 miles north at Millbrook Jan. 30 and Feb. 2, following year; where it was also well established. This bird shows definite change of winter location; quite unusual, I understand."

Says Bergstrom of Hartford: "It has long been known that there may be a 'wild'

race and a 'tame' race of House Wrens." (Is that so, Berg? I didn't know.) He suggests a dandy project would be specializing on banding a lot of woody wild wrens and a lot of housey wrens and thus attempt to settle the question. —Says

he may do it himself next season, as nearby on the Connecticut River are plenty of wild wrens. —Who else on our mailing-list can work on this project too?

IMPORTANT BARN SWALLOW STUDY

Individual A (Ad. M.)	Banded: 5/30/48	in Sullivan Co.N.Y.	Recaptured 7/3/49
B (Ad. F.)	5/31/47		7/9/49
C (Ad. F.)	6/30/46		7/3/47 & 7/9/49
D (Ad. F.)	7/3/48		7/9/49
E (Ad. M.)	7/3/48		7/9/49
F (Ad. M.)	7/3/48		8/6/49
G (Ad. M.)	6/23/47	at Jones Beach, L. I.	6/18/49
H (Ad. F.)	6/19/48		6/18/49
I (Ad. F.)	6/23/47		6/19/48 & 7/13/49

IMPORTANT CHIMNEY SWIFT STUDY

Individual A (Ad. F?)	Banded: 8/16/48	Recaptured	7/16/49*
B (Ad. F?)	7/10/48		7/16/49
C (Ad. M.)	8/15/48 (mate of 'B')		7/16/49**
D (Ad. F.)	7/10/48		7/16/49
E (Ne. M?)	7/24/46	5/30/47; 7/3/48 &	7/16/49
F (Ne. F?)	8/3/44		1946,48 & 49
G (Ad. F.)	7/3/48		7/30/49
H (Ad. M.)	7/23/46		7/3/48 & 7/30/49***

* Nested elsewhere 1948; recapt'd where banded, 1949.

** Mated again with 1948 mate.

*** Nesting in same place both years.

(All Swift Bandings done in Sullivan Co., N. Y.)

The above data on two species, collected by Dick Fischer (of Long Island), appear to show conclusively that both birds habitually return to the same nesting place or nearby area annually. Hopefully, Fischer will extend his findings on these (and on Wrens, Phoebes and Tree Swallows) for additional seasons. No question —he's squarely on the Specialization side here; devoting most of his current work we understand, to this, rather than to "Mass Banding" which he has gone on

record to deprecate in a former statement in EBBANEWS. . . . Here's a type of banding any member could do. It seems high-time most EBBA members began on some special and particular study upon one or a few species, so as to add to ornithologic knowledge. The NEWS would like to print here many suggestions for such studies which our Members send in. These ideas might stimulate all of us.