

ONCE IN A LIFE TIME!

by June R. Conway

Shortly after seven on the morning of June third this year, my father, E. Earl Rider, removed a "yellow-crowned" sparrow from a Middleton thrush trap in our yard. He had watched through binoculars as it alighted near the trap and immediately entered it. Knowing that it was an unusual species, he hastened to remove it from the trap and bring it into the house. We were thrilled to discover that we had captured a rare and beautiful bird. It was a male Golden-crowned Sparrow in adult plumage, at this season an inhabitant of Alaska and northwestern Canada.

Before it was released bearing band number 21-122216, the sparrow attended the testimonial dinner for Roger Tory Peterson at Lititz, Pennsylvania, where it was examined by no less than Dr. Peterson, Dr. Alexander Wetmore, Ludlow Griscom, Seth H. Low, Dr. Maurice Broun, Dr. Earl. Poole, and many other guests. It was eminently fitting that this bird, added to the Pennsylvania State list through the banding program, should be held in the hand of Seth Low, director of this work!

Raymond J. Middleton, EBBA President, and family came to our home to inspect the Golden-crown, as did Mr. Charles K. Nichols of The American Museum of Natural History, and Mrs. Nichols. Many other birders came from within a radius of seventy-five miles. The Westfield (New Jersey) Bird Club was strongly represented, and many members came from the West Chester and Lehigh Valley Bird Clubs.

Being primarily a seed eater, the sparrow thrived in captivity until June 16th when it was released to go on its way rather than end up in a museum collection. It remained with us until the evening of the eighteenth when it was recaptured for the fifth and last time.

This individual is, in so far as we know, the second banded east of its normal range and one of five or six records east of the Rocky Mountain region where it is but a straggler, it normally keeping west of the Sierra Nevada mountain range.