

CARE OF YOUNG BIRDS

Last summer, Mrs. Howard G. McEntee (July issue, p.5) wanted to know what could be done to stem the tide of fledglings brought to her by well-intentioned yet misinformed persons when they should have been left with their parents. Mrs. Robert A. Arny, 149 Watchung Ave., Upper Montclair, N.J., agrees, in a letter to the Editor dated August 25, 1952, that Mrs. McEntee is dead right in her effort to educate children and others to leave the young birds where they are found. However, she also admits, despite the best efforts of this sort, there always will be some birds which will be brought to the bander or about which he or she will be asked for advice on feeding. Space does not permit publication of all of Mrs. Arny's interesting letter, but it seems to the Editor that her comments on feeding are very pertinent at this time.

"Young birds thrive best on chopped lean meat and whole wheat bread, and a minimum of water. Raptores should have horse meat with feathers (from the poultry market) cut up fine and mixed in. Crows, jay jays, and other omnivores like canned dog food. Grated raw carrots should be added to the diet of all but birds of prey; it supplies calcium for bone and feather building.

"Witch hazel is the best thing I have found for treating bruises, and wounds should be bathed with ST37. Above all, with young birds, avoid chilling."

Some other comments on banding in general which Mrs. Arny makes are of interest. Here are some: "I should like to see the small banders get a little encouragement. Somehow the idea has gotten around that its numbers that count. Undoubtedly a lot of data are better than a little, but the back yard bander's greatest contribution is not the scientific findings, it is that he stands in the position of an apostle teaching to all around him the beauty, the value, and the interest of all nature."

To this the Editor feels impelled to add that more banding of large numbers of birds just for the sake of banding and chiefly for the sake of recoveries does not, in his opinion, warrant the right to band. Banding should be regarded as a means to an end, not as an end in itself.