

When the birds are recaptured, as some 10 percent are, the band numbers are sent to the Fish and Wildlife Service. It then refers to its rosters of banded birds to determine how long ago they were banded, what their favorite roosting spots are, their preferred travel routes and their life expectancy. All that from a numbered band.

Fast, a 67-year-old former Internal Revenue attorney, got started on banding in 1946 quite by accident. Until that time his chief interest had been in feeding birds. But when the largest number of evening grosbeaks seen in these parts in a long time showed up to munch on sunflower seed in his yard, the Wildlife people became interested. They invited Fast to join them in the banding business.

Since that time, Fast has

banded 10,134 members of 53 species. His biggest production period was a two-month rush in 1947, when he numbered 875 cedar waxwings. He hasn't seen more than a handful of them passing through since, but he's had reports on four of his band-carriers from that 1947 rush. Two were reported from North Carolina, one from Mississippi and another from Louisiana.

Fast pursues his hobby on a high-budget basis. He spends nearly \$50 a year on food, traps and repairs and he operates a dozen traps and feeders, all within his spacious back yard.

The Virginia gentleman, who does business with everything except starlings and English sparrows, is seeing about 25 species of birds at this time of year. About 50 types will be dropping by in March and April, the rush season for bird

tourists.

Fast's backyard undertaking attracts a different kind of visitors, too—the human kind. He's had so many people drop by to visit his attractive layout that neighbors sometimes ask if he's selling his comfortable home.

Fast considers his banding a source of great satisfaction during his days of retirement. "I'll never be a lonesome old man," he smiles.

Fast can't explain entirely just why his location is so attractive to the birds. His volume of "business" far exceeds that of other banders, but the only clue he can give is that his neighborhood must be in their migration path.

With 10,000 of 'em dropping by in nine years, he must be sitting right smack in the middle of the birds' Route 66.

HIS LUCKY DAY!

John J. McDermott, 71 Lotus Lane, Paramus, New Jersey, writes as follows of his experience with Common Terns:

"On August 7, 1954, Keahon Garland and the writer banded 40 Common Terns at Tuckerton Beach, New Jersey. (Tuckerton Beach=Tow Island, Little Beach Island, or ??; area is south of Beach Haven and may be in either Ocean or Atlantic Counties.--Ed.)

"On the shore, I found dead a banded (Common) Tern, No. 47-328832. It was banded June 17, 1948, at the Austin Ornithological Research Station, Tern Island, Chatham, Barnstable County, Massachusetts.

"(Common) Tern No. 553-35815 that we banded that day was (later) 'found exhausted on beach, being cared for and will be released when it recovers' on October 22, 1954, by Mr. Carl Etienne, Societe pour la Protection des Oiseaux, 7 Ruelle Vieux, Port-au-Prince, Haiti, West Indies.

"Maybe I'll only band on August 7th every year."

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