

of birds, were not valid but led me to want to repeat the experiment in the future if I can discover an efficient way of trapping English Sparrows.

My trouble was not due to a small population in the area, as there were several flocks of at least 300 individuals living in the ivy of the sides of buildings. I considered a water trap ineffective as there was a large pond nearby. I used every kind of bait I could think of: standard wild bird seed (from the Audubon Society), sunflower seed, suet, bread, rolls, muffins, and even doughnuts. Nothing would attract them. The traps were kept baited day and night with the various types of food, but even when no people were near, the birds would not feed in the traps.

The only conclusion I could reach was that the sparrows were extraordinarily trap-shy, which seems rather unusual for the species. If the birds had another easy food supply nearby, I could not find it. I would be very grateful if some of the other members could help me out by suggesting baits or types of traps they have found particularly attractive to English Sparrows. --28 Bayview Terrace, Manhasset, N.Y.

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CONCERNING BIRDS OF PREY

by Benjamin P. Burtt, Ph.D.,

Associate Professor of Chemistry, Syracuse University

For three seasons, I have been engaged in banding birds of prey in the nest, and it has been most exciting and will eventually tell us something of their movements. The Red-tail is of particular interest to me, not only because of its great abundance in central New York, but because we do not know too much concerning its seasonal movements. We see them here in the breeding season, we see them about the same areas in Winter, and we see them in migration. Now which birds are which?

The techniques which I use were adapted from those of Broley, and it was after I read his book that I thought about banding nestling birds of prey. I shoot a two-ounce lead weight over a limb with a large home-made slingshot. This pulls up a 25-pound nylon test line from a spinning reel. A clothes line is pulled up with the fishline and next a half-inch manila rope. With a sturdy friend on the other end of the rope and with one end tied to a safety belt I climb up using irons.



STARTING UP—Dr. Benjamin Burtt begins his 70-foot climb to nest of Great Horned Owls. He is equipped with extra long telephone linesman's spikes, heavy boots, clothes, a bag in which to carry young owls if they put up a fight, a fencing mask to guard his face in the event of an attack by a larger bird, heavy gloves, and safety ropes.

Most everyone in the Onondaga Audubon Society knows of my interest and they keep their eyes open for nests. Since many nests are used year after year, the nest finding is not difficult after the first year.

Great Horned Owls take over old Red-tail nests, and while checking nests for incubating Red-tails, I find Great Horned Owls ready for banding.

At present, I know of 35 Red-tail nests in the area surrounding Syracuse. Not all are used each year and not all broods are completely successful, but so far, in three seasons, I have banded 47 Red-tails, 5 Red-shoulders, 29 Kestrels, 4 Marsh Hawks, 8 Cooper's, 2 Goshawks, 14 Great Horned Owls, 4 Barn Owls, 4 Long-eared Owls (Verbail pole trap), 3 Saw-whet Owls (brought to me by SPCA or found by friends), 10 Screech Owls, and 1 Snowy Owl grounded by oil.

While most of the Red-tail nests usually contain two eggs, one has had three each year and the parents have been successful in raising them all.

Mr. Broley warned me of the parent Goshawks and Horned Owls, but for some reason I have never been attacked. I do



DA NOIVE OF D' GUY! These young Great Horned Owls got their backs up when Dr. Burtt removed them from their nest for banding.

Syracuse Post-Standard Pictorial, May 29, 1955

carry a mask though, just in case, when banding these species.

As for recoveries so far they have been few, but percentage wise I suppose it hasn't been too bad. Several Screech Owls have been found about Syracuse, a Cooper's Hawk was shot at Perkienville, Pa. (Perkiomenville?-Ed.), a Red-tail in Brunswick, Georgia, in its first winter, and another in its second winter in Hamlin, West Virginia.

If other EBBA members live within 100 miles of Syracuse and they find active nests I'd like to know of it and make an attempt to band the young. So far we have been unable to locate eagle nests, but I have hopes for we frequently see adults and young.--109 Haffenden Road, Syracuse 10, New York

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