

PROBLEMS THAT TRAPPING-STATION OPERATORS MAY SOLVE (cont.)

Excerpts from the Manual for Bird Banders

Territory. - What is the range limit during breeding, winter, or other seasons? What are the territorial limits about nests? Do both birds defend the territory?

Dispersal. - What are the facts in connection with dispersal of young that do not return to area where they were hatched? (This may have to do with extension of range locally or on a large scale.) What proportion of males and females return to the same nesting sites? When leaving the nest do the parents keep the young in the nesting locality or lead them into adjacent territory? How strong is the homing instinct of different species? (Test by experiment.)

Family groups. - What is the length of time that the unity of the family is preserved? Are these groups the family parties from a neighborhood? If not, are they grouped by age or sex?

Permanent residents. - Are so-called "permanent residents" the same individuals or is there a movement of greater or lesser extent in such species?

Longevity. - What is the normal length of life of different species as shown by yearly return records? (To be continued)

STRANGE COWBIRDS IN ROCKAWAY, N. J.

By Gail C. Cannon

On July 9, 1958 we trapped a bird that we had some difficulty in identifying. It was 7" long, with a cowbird head, flat on top. The bird was all grey on the back; there the similarity ended. When we had it in our hand, we saw that it had a large yellow throat-patch, breast completely washed with yellow with many grey spots. The under-tail coverts were washed with yellow, and the yellow on the face was streaked with grey. We first called Mr. C. K. Nichols of Ridgewood, N.J. As he was on his way to New York to the Museum of Natural History he could not look at it. We took it to Mrs. Dater, in Ramsey, N.J. After extensive reading we decided that it was a rather rare Juvenile Plumage. It is partly described in Swift's Sequences of Plumages and Moults. But it was much more yellow than he described, and the yellow was more generally distributed over the entire body. We banded the bird with band #56-121021 and released it in Ramsey, N.J.

Later, Mr. Nichols called to say he found five or six specimens that answered our description in the collection of bird skins at the Museum.

Next, on July 10, 1958 another bird was in the trap. Length $6 \frac{3}{4}$ " , head brownish-grey with yellow eye-ring, bill - upper mandible grey, lower straw colored, skin around bill purple. Area between eye and bill was very yellow, cheek-patch yellowish, under chin light yellow finely streaked with grey, prominent dark streak from bill down throat. The back and wings were grey, every feather edged with yellow, first $\frac{1}{2}$ primaries edged with yellow and warm wash all over breast, extending to under-tail coverts. This bird was given band #56-121022.

Bird #3. On July 16 another bird was in the trap. This one had white throat-patch, breast washed with light cream all over, much speckled with dark gray as if feathers had light edges on each one, appearing scolloped. Length 7". Given band #56-121026.

Bird #4. This bird was larger than the others, being over $7 \frac{1}{2}$ " inches long. The head was peppered all over with dark grey and light grey, light edges of feathers making it appear scolloped. Breast similar to one that was released in Ramsey, only entire coloring much more brilliant, nearly light orange. This bird had three small black flies on it, but they escaped me. This bird was taken on July 17 and banded #56-121027.

Bird #5. On July 17, one more of these queer cowbirds was in the trap. This one was the smallest, being $6 \frac{1}{2}$ " long and still somewhat downy, but had the same yellow throat with dark lines on each side and yellowish sides of face and breast. Banded #56-121028.

These birds will probably become normal-appearing adults, but with the bands on, if any are retaken, it will be interesting to follow them and see. We will be surely looking for them next year.

In connection with these birds we have some further observations. To begin with; we had within twenty acres of our house, three nests of Black-and-White Warblers, two nests of Chestnut-sided Warblers, 1 nest of Blue-winged Warblers and four nests of Goldfinches. We did not see nor trap any young Blue-winged or Chestnut-sided, only a couple of Black-and-white Warblers and very few Goldfinches. Perhaps other natural enemies were the cause, but it is within the realm of possibility that Mrs. Cowbird was the cause of it all. It seems to us very likely all these strange Cowbirds were the offspring of one female. What do you think?