

By Robert C. Fringer

While working on a field study of redwing blackbirds, I have had the opportunity to observe several unusual events which I thought might be of some interest to the readers of EBBA News. I am sure that some of these oddities have been viewed by others, but I thought I would mention them for what they are worth.

On July 3, 1969 while searching for redwing nests and swatting greenhead flies in the Tuckerton area of New Jersey, I came across the skeletal remains of a bird which I believe to be a flamingo. Attached to a leg was an unmarked aluminum band which I removed and continue to possess. No inscription can be found on the band. Inquiries as to the bird's unusual existence in the area revealed that a flamingo had been seen the previous fall in the vicinity of Story Island (Great Bay). Perhaps the EBBA News readers could shed additional light on this unusual find.

On two separate occasions I have banded redwing nestlings in one nest and then on a later date (several days) found these same banded nestlings in another nest. In one case, the nests were approximately 10 feet apart and in the other case the nests were separated by about 20 feet. In neither case could the banded birds fly. I thought this nomadic behavior was rather unique and wonder if this behavior occurs frequently.

I think we all agree that birds face countless dangers during their brief stay in this world. I question how often we increase the odds against these creatures by adding a small metal band to the leg. Allow me to explain the event which prompted my question. While turning my car around at the end of a narrow brush-lined road I noticed some movement near the edge of the road. Much to my surprise I found an immature female redwing completely entangled in a large wad of discarded monofilament fishing line. To add to my dismay was the fact that a band on the bird's leg was responsible for this poor bird's dilemma. To further compound the situation, I discovered that I was the responsible party who had banded this same bird as a nestling, only a few short weeks previous to the incident. (This interesting story shows the increased danger to the bird of an improperly closed band. Ed.) Luckily, the redwing was in good health and was allowed to escape its monofilament bonds with the assistance of a tender hand and a sharp knife. How often do similar situations occur?

Somewhere in the Tuckerton area is a female frantically searching for a new nesting site. Earlier in the season (1969) she was well on her way of producing a normal clutch of eggs. However, a bully in the form of a night heron preempted the squatter's rights and constructed a nest directly on top of the existing redwing nest. One can imagine the noise that ensued when that heron started her nest building!

In addition to our nesting success surveys is a program designed to study the local movements of redwing blackbird populations. Presently

we are capturing birds in Japanese mist nets, banding them and attaching various colored leg streamers. (1970 Ed.) We are currently using red, blue, yellow, white and green colored leg streamers. We would sincerely appreciate reports concerning observations of these birds. Data as to leg streamer color and date of observation would be extremely valuable. All birds so marked are redwings captured in the Tuckerton area of New Jersey.

Please send observation information to: Robert C. Fringer, Principal Biologist, Division of Plant Industry, New Jersey Department of Agriculture P.O. Box 1888, Trenton, New Jersey 08625.

In the course of capturing redwings for banding purposes, we have also recaptured several birds already banded. The numbers were as follows:

592-36832; 572-68723; 572-68725; 632-91509 and 632-91562 (all Redwings).

N.J. Department of Agriculture, Div. of Plant Industry, Trenton, N.J. 08625

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IBBA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Inland Bird Banding Association is having a four day conference this year at Birmingham, Alabama with hopes that many banders can work it into their vacation plans, and that southern members of both IBBA and EBBA can have an opportunity to go to a conference in their own area.

The conference will be August 28 to 31, at Birmingham-Southern College, hosted by the Birmingham Audubon Society. Accommodations will be on campus and meals will be available at the college cafeteria; all conveniently located near the meeting rooms. Several interesting field trips and banding demonstrations have been planned, as well as a program that will appeal to bird and banding enthusiasts. There is still room on the program for any talks, programs, or papers anyone wishes to present (see EBBA News, 33: 138, 1970) and any traps, banding equipment and banding aids you can bring for display will be welcomed. Information and registration forms may be obtained from Mr. Robert R. Reid, 1500 Brown-Marx Building, Birmingham, Alabama 35203.

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The above news item was contributed to EBBA NEWS by IBBA's secretary, Mrs. Martin Rudy. Mrs. Rudy is also the artist who contributed a great many of the drawings which make EBBA NEWS such a pleasantly illustrated publication. The Crossbill is this issue's Diary (Ralph Bell) is her newest contribution. EBBA thanks you, Mrs. Rudy. (Editor).