

Ebba Nus



A FRIENDLY REPORT ISSUED MONTHLY TO THE MEMBERS
OF THE EASTERN BIRD BANDING ASSOCIATION

REACHING
OVER
375
BANDERS
EVERY MONTH

May, 1943

"LET US BAND TOGETHER"

Vol. 6, No. 5

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MEET BEECHER S. BOWDISH, BANDER

"Keep 'em flying" has a double meaning for Beecher S. Bowdish. To him it means birds, too.

Mr. Bowdish, who celebrated his 71st birthday in February, is secretary-treasurer, executive officer and only paid employee of the Audubon Society of New Jersey. He organized the society in 1910 and has been running it ever since.

In these days of many "causes", arousing interest in birds is a tough job, Mr. Bowdish finds.

"Many people say 'We can't waste time and energy on this now, with a war going on'" he explains. "They think it's not a 'human interest' subject. They don't realize how important it is to the war effort. Food is important in war as well as in peace, and birds, by destroying harmful insects are of great assistance to agriculture."

The New Jersey Audubon Society has been a one-man show, as far as its payroll is concerned, for two years.

"The trustees decided that further curtailment was necessary, so an assistant was dispensed with," is the way Mr. Bowdish puts it. The Society's annual report also reveals that to insure the survival of the work to which he has devoted most of his life, Mr. Bowdish has at his own suggestion accepted a 50 per cent cut in salary.

The Society now has some 1,800 members, whose dues and contributions represent its only source of income. In earlier years both gifts and membership were larger.

The decline, Mr. Bowdish says, is due at least in part to the fact that the Society's biggest job — proper protective legislation — is practically complete.

"It is safe to say that protective legislation in New Jersey is equal to any in the United States," Mr. Bowdish says. "The Society is responsible for a considerable part of it. We fought for the Bobolink law and the pole trap law. We fought for cat licensing, too, but the State Fish and Game Commission deserted us on that.

"Our principal duty, as far as legislation is concerned, is as watch-dog. The legislation is pretty good as it stands, but we must be on guard all the time against a tendency to retrograde."

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Beecher S. Bowdish, Bander (Continued)

Continuous education, Mr. Bowdish believes, is the only way in which the Society's work can be carried on. This is well established today in the schools -- also a result of the Society's program -- but apparently produces too few adult Audubon members.

Mr. Bowdish carries on the Society's work from a small file-crammed office at 206 Market Street, Newark, and from his home in Demarest. Nearly all calls on birds which reach the SPCA find their way to Mr. Bowdish.

"Despite our pleas that we are concerned only with wild birds, they insist on sending us calls on domestic birds, like pigeons," Mr. Bowdish sighs. "Because we want to be helpful we now have a file of pigeon bands, so we can identify nearly every banded bird.

"We also get calls from people who have found injured birds or young birds they think have been deserted. In the first call I can usually judge whether the bird can be saved. Being alone, I can't go out very often or very far, so I try to get people to bring birds in, if there's a chance for them. On "lost" birds we usually find the caller is deceived. We suggest the baby be left as near as possible to where it was found."

Ornithology was "hatched" in Mr. Bowdish, he smiles. He served as a collector for the U. S. National Museum before the turn of the century. He was on the staff of the National Audubon Society when he established the Jersey society as a spare-time activity. In addition, he has been an inspector of caged birds for the Port of New York since 1904.

Mr. Bowdish defends even the Crow and the Blue Jay, though he admits both are "bad actors" in some respects.

"However, a federal study finally decided that the balance of good and bad was just a shade in the crow's favor", he says, "And while I know Jays are rascals, I've never personally caught them at it with the goods, even though they nest around my house."

-- "The Newark Sunday Call"

From time to time, as space permits, we hope to feature other banders, so that each of us may know the members of our group better, through the medium of these "thumb-nail sketches". EBBA NUS doesn't know the exact number of birds Mr. and Mrs. Bowdish have banded, but don't doubt that it is more than any other bander in the State of New Jersey. He started in the year "one" of bird banding, being a member of the American Bird Banding Society. He is one of the founders of EASTERN and served as Treasurer for several terms. He has always been a member as is his banding partner, Mrs. Bowdish. He can always be found at nearly all the meetings but persistently declines any office, wishing only to band birds. This he certainly does.

NEWS FOR THE BIRD BANDERS

On April 18, 1943, Richard Fischer of Flushing, L.I., N.Y. trapped a Blue Jay carrying band No. 37-302750. He has checked with some nearby banders and hasn't found who banded it. Did you? Mrs. Marie Beals, Will Astle or Lester Hutton didn't band it. Would you look in your records and let us all know if it is your bird.

Stanley Grierson of Katonah is now at Camp Peabody, Gorham, N.H. and would like to receive letters from banders.

COULD THIS HAPPEN IN YOUR AREA?

Despite the fast growing population of Flushing, it is amazing that the clippings such as the two quoted below, could appear in this day and age of the bird banding movement. It is more amazing, when it is remembered that Flushing, L.I., N.Y. has always been the home of several very active bird banders. Here are the clippings:

"WANTED: AN ORNITHOLOGIST -- Strange Birds Invade Flushing."

"Three small, dark birds, one of which wore a tag with the identification number 209,891, were found before noon today by John Fliedmer in the attic of his home, 42-30, 157th St., Flushing.

"Fliedmer, whose son, Leonard, is head of the science department at Flushing High School, was unable to identify the species, but said the birds were about 6 inches long and had dark plumage marked by gray. An abbreviated message on the tag read, 'If found, notify Biol. Surv. 40-209,981.

"He said he was at a loss to explain the presence of the birds in the attic because the windows were closed. He added that they may have flown in through some opening of which he was unaware. Fliedmer, explaining the message, said that it was so cryptic that he doubted if he could locate the owner and appealed for aid."- (North Shore Journal, Flushing, N.Y., March 23, 1943)

Our member, Will Astle of Flushing banded the above bird, a Starling, on November 3rd, 1942.

Another clipping from the same paper, two days later:

"LAST RITES -- 3 Schoolgirls Bury Dead Starling"

"Three 13-year-old Flushing girls today played out the last act in a little mercy drama. They sent to Washington a little lead band that was around the leg of a dead bird they found yesterday near the Long Island Railroad tracks in Flushing.

"The bird was identified as a Starling, through an ornithology book. The band is inscribed: 'Notify Biological Survey, 40-258,793, Washington, D.C.'"

"Last night they buried the bird in a little bird and animal cemetery in the back yard of 144-57 38th Avenue, where he lies with 2 squirrels and 3 pigeons.

"The girls are Marion Clark, Joan Young, Janet Peck and Audrey Kinghorn."

Will Astle did not band this bird and EBBA NUS would like to know who did.

The two clippings are given above in detail, as they illustrate a manner in which recoveries may come to light. Banders should be constantly on the alert for such items, prevalent in the spring, and they should not mind a few newspaper inaccuracies. The recovery is the main thing.

NEWS FOR THE BANDERS

Mr. and Mrs. Jesse V. Miller of New Hyde Park, L.I., N.Y. announce the Return-2 of "Sir Stork". Their young daughter, Nancy, now has a baby brother, Donald Gordon, who arrived on March 26th. If he grows up to be an enthusiastic a bird bander as his father and one half as charming as his mother what a bander he will be!

WHEN BANDING YOUNG

A member has suggested that when banding young birds in the nest, such as Robins, and when the banding is done at a time when the youngsters are almost ready to fly, an old empty bushel basket is very helpful. After banding such birds, it will often be found that they refuse "to stay put" when placed back in the nest. Rather than have the youngsters encounter unnecessary risk or become easy prey for cats, due to their premature departure from the nest, it has been found that if the entire nest and the youngsters are placed in the bushel basket and the basket tied up in the tree near the site of the nest, their lives can be saved. The youngsters haven't the ability to get out of the bushel basket and hop around inside. The parents will feed them in the basket and get them back in the nest at night. Within a few days they will have grown stronger and be able to get out of the basket and launch forth in the world in the condition "Mother Nature" intended them to start on their own. This method has been tried and found successful in two cases known to the bander.

NEWS FOR THE BIRD BANDER

The September, 1942 issue of "Science" contained an article by Dayton Stoner of Albany, N.Y., on a 7-year-old Bank Swallow that returned. The December issue of the same periodical contains an article on a Sora attacked by a fish and later killed by a car by the same author.

The Arbor and Bird Day issue of the N. Y. State Bulletin to the Schools, issued by the State Educational Dept., contains articles by several banders. These include an article on hawks by Stanley Gricerson of Katonah, N.Y., Vernon Haskins of East Durham, N.Y. on banding, Dayton Stoner of Albany, N.Y. on Sapsuckers, Charles J. Spiker of Branchport, N.Y. on Choosing a Wildlife Hobby, and many others.

Washington has reported the recovery of an adult Blue Jay banded by the late Carl A. A. Pedersen, while residing at Montvale, N.J. on July 9, 1939. The bird was killed near Monsey, Rockland Co., N.Y. about June 22, 1942, by William Hopper.

Howard P. Mahnken of Brooklyn, N. Y. has been enduring an epidemic of cat trouble at his station recently. After an active educational campaign among his neighbors which has resulted in numerous cats now wearing collars and bells, and very strict measures with strays, the situation is now under control. Mr. Mahnken is getting a better catch this spring than he has ever had before.

George Seth Guion, 1701 American Bank Bldg., New Orleans, La. wishes to purchase the following issues of EBBA NUS to complete his file:

Vol. II 1939, Nos. 3 and 4

Vol. III 1940, No. 3

Vol. IV 1941, Nos. 2 and 7

Any member having such copies and wishing to dispose of them should write to Mr. Guion.

E. A. McIlhenny of Avery Island, La. has been banding birds for 25 years and in that time has placed bands on 272,848 individuals. He was one of the first members of the American Bird Banding Society who started banding in America. Dr. Arthur A. Allen was Secretary of the Society at that time and the offices were in the American Museum of Natural History in New York.

Bander John F. McMahon of Berwyn, Pa. is now Lt. John F. McMahon.

A CANADIAN WATERFOWL BANDING STATION

By Harold B. Wood, M. D.

Dayton Murphy of Wellington, Ontario, who recently joined the ranks of EBBA, writes, "Last Fall I finished putting up my trap on Sept. 12th, or I should say at 2:00 A.M. next morning. Before sunrise I made two catches and got 117 Blue-wing Teal and 1 Gallinule. Amongst them were 9 Teal I had banded in 1941 and 1 banded by me in 1938". Incidentally, this shows the enthusiasm of the man -- a true scientist. A "gray call duck" hatched in the spring of 1942, left Dec. 12 and was shot near Town Creek, in the northwest corner of Alabama on or about Dec. 28; approximately 975 miles from where it was banded. The year before, one of Murphy's birds made a record "run"; he banded a Blue-winged Teal at Wellington on Aug. 27, 1941 and it was shot on Sept. 22, 1941 on St. Vincent's Isle, British West Indies, having flown 2800 miles in 25 days, or averaging 112 miles a day. Another Teal, banded Oct. 1, 1938 was shot in Trinidad, 3100 miles away, Feb. 8, 1939; another was shot 500 miles north of Trinidad 42 days after being banded.

Dayton Murphy has earned a reputation throughout eastern Canada as a friend of waterfowl. Adopting methods similar to those of Jack Miner, near Kingsville, Ontario, he began with his own bands and has a water trap. He feeds, rears, harbors and bands waterfowl, principally Blue-winged Teal, Canada Geese and a few other species. Mr. Murphy lives on the shore of Prince Edward Island in the northeast corner of Lake Ontario. His place is one to be sure to visit when travelling conditions again permit.

As a gunner, Mr. Murphy shot for market until legal restrictions forbade such a trade. Then his true nature asserted itself and he began protecting the birds, as a benefactor, not a destroyer of game. He began by raising ducks, geese and teal, using celluloid bands with his own name, address and number on the band in case any of his birds should wander away. In 1935 a bantam hen raised 3 American Coots which left, wearing his bands. One was shot in Florida on Dec. 5, 1935 and another one in Wisconsin in the fall of 1936. These recoveries so thrilled him that he began banding in earnest. His trap, in the water, is only 28 by 30 feet in size and 4 feet high, with a drop door on one side. His Blue-winged Teal have been shot in Manitoba, New Brunswick, Cuba, Florida, North Dakota and through the Antilles. One of his prizes is a White-fronted Goose, a rarity in the east, which flew down from a flock in 1937, alighting on the lake. It took Murphy about three hours to induce this bird to swim into his trap, but 16 days later it was feeding from his hand, and has remained in his sanctuary ever since. His experience is proof of the saying of Jack Miner, "There are no wild ducks, naturally wild; only man has made them so". Mr. Murphy's so-called wild geese stand on his hands, as photographs he sent attest, showing Blue, White-fronted and Canada Geese standing on his outstretched hands.

The Canadian lawmakers have not, as yet, given Dayton Murphy the same protection from gunners that was granted to Jack Miner. At Wellington, sportsmen trespass in his sanctuary and shoot his birds, including domestic white ducks. On Oct. 1, 1941, a Black Duck was shot there after being reared and banded by the late Frank Foster, former secretary of EBBA, at Phoenixville, Pa., in 1940. Another duck, a Mallard, banded Oct. 21, 1931 by Dr. W. R. Large at Rochester, N.Y. was shot at Wellington in November, 1939.

In an early issue a tabulation of some of the returns and recoveries of Mr. Murphy's banded birds will be given, taken from numerous newspaper articles published in Canada which Mr. Murphy has made available to us.

Prof. Dayton Stoner
New York State Museum
Albany, New York



Sec. 562 P. L. & R.

REPORT A DEAD BIRD WEARING A BAND, WHEN FOUND, TO
Fish & Wildlife Service
Washington, D. C.

"BUY WAR SAVINGS STAMPS AND BONDS"



Stoner
1600
5/11/43