

Ebba Nus



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

REACHING
OVER
375
BANDERS
EVERY MONTH

July, 1943

"LET US BAND TOGETHER"

Vol. 6 No. 7

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BANDING IN GEORGIA

Raymond J. Fleetwood of Round Oak, Ga. reports on his banding from July 1, 1942 to July 1, 1943. During this period he banded 4,850 birds. Of this total, 4,320 were Chimney Swifts. Enclosed with the report is an interesting tabulation of his recoveries from all over the country. EBBA plans to save the account of his Swift banding and recoveries for a later issue. At this time, the balance of 530 will be commented upon.

Of these 530 birds of several species, 246 were Bluebirds, all banded this summer, with the exception of 30 banded last year. Most of these Bluebirds were fledglings obtained from 80 nesting boxes on the Piedmont Wildlife Refuge. Some of these boxes contain the third brood of the season and Mr. Fleetwood estimates that he will be able to band at least 75 more young before the close of the breeding season this year.

Among the birds banded were 4 Brown-headed Nuthatches which were reared in a nesting box at headquarters by the same pair which reared a brood in the vicinity last year. The young and parents were banded last year and the new brood this year was also banded.

A pair of Flickers tried to enlarge the entrances on several Bluebird boxes and finally decided to use the box made from a hollow log that contained 4 young Bluebirds. These young were thrown out with the nesting material. The cavity was enlarged by the Flickers and they raised 3 young. These were banded as was the male Flicker of the pair.

Last winter Mr. Fleetwood caught 112 Slate Colored Juncos. Of these 12 were returns from previous years. During the same period 116 Chipping Sparrows entered his traps, 20 of which had been banded in previous years.

Mr. Fleetwood operates about 10 traps and 2 of these are Fabians, a large one which is not very successful and a smaller one. The small one once took 8 birds at a time, a Cardinal, 3 White-throats, 3 Juncos and a Song Sparrow. On that day the trap took 16 individuals, the best catch for the season. While Field Sparrows were abundant he only caught 1 new bird but took 2 returns.

While banding Bluebirds he found 2 broods that had been killed by ants and one destroyed by flying squirrels. Another box, containing 4 eggs, had nesting material above the eggs and another set of eggs above the first set.

He banded 30 Cardinals in the vicinity in 1942 but was unable to catch a single banded individual last winter although he got 10 new ones in his traps.

OUR FRIENDS, THE FLICKERS

A Bander asks, "Did you ever see a nest of Flickers with all young birds exactly the same size?" All will agree that there is often considerable variation in the size of most siblings of every species, but the question is an interesting one. Lieut Burt L. Monroe, now of the Army, but formerly State Ornithologist of Kentucky, visited the banding station of Dr. Wood at Harrisburg, Pa., late in June. Commenting on a nestful of Flickers in Dr. Wood's vegetable garden, Lieut. Monroe said it was the first brood he had ever seen with the young all the same size. Dr. Wood attributes this happy state of affairs to the size of their home. Originally, the bird house was a part of a round wooden porch pillar on Dr. Wood's front porch, --discarded in house alterations, with a little judicious cutting it became a Flicker house. The inside cavity is $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter and 9 inches deep. In this house 5 eggs were laid. On June 8 four hatched but one fledgling died 3 days later. All were banded at the age of 6 days and the parents banded also. On July 2 the youngsters left the nest at the age of 24 days. Forbush gives the usual time as 14 to 16 days in a natural nest. The difference in time probably hinges on the size of the cavity. In a natural nest at 16 days they are overcrowded and the young probably leave with less chance of survival than youngsters in a larger nest, older and stronger and better fitted to make their way in the world.

It is Dr. Wood's belief that the natural Flicker cavity is never large enough in diameter to permit equal feeding of the young, hence they vary greatly in size, strength and resistance. Banders should encourage the making of Flicker boxes just as they do houses for more easily attracted species. The box should be at least 5 inches in inside diameter and 6 inches deep below the entrance. The entrance can be square or any shape. Care should be taken to prevent Starlings from "renting" the box before and after the Flickers arrive.

BANDING AT BARTRAM'S GARDEN

Dr. Edward E. Wildman of Pocono Manor, Pa. writes: "This Spring I began banding at Bartram's Garden, the very spot where Alexander Wilson began his study of birds, under the friendly guidance of William Bartram, son of the botanist. This is a classic spot in our interesting hobby, for these birds must be the direct descendants of those Wilson first studied, or that William Bartram studied, for he turned over all of his notes to Wilson, so he really was our pioneer."

Dr. Wildman usually bands for only a few weeks in mid-summer, yet in the past 6 years he has banded a total of 428 birds. Surprisingly, 222 of these have been Chipping Sparrows. "I thought nothing of this," he writes, "As these birds are so easily caught and I supposed everyone else was getting them. Yet, only two or three list them among their species in EBBA or IBBA, except in very small numbers. How is this?"

Dr. Wildman reports plenty of returns, but so far no one else has found one of his birds. He gets a relatively large number of immatures late in the summer and agrees with Raymond T. Fuller that banders need a handbook on passerines at this stage. (EBBA NUS, Vol 6.1.) His place of banding is at an elevation of 1800 ft. and points out that the station of Marion A. Boggs of Waynesville, N. C. is also a high country station and wonder if she gets Chippies there, also.

Mrs. Fielder, Katonah, N. Y. bander met Dr. Wildman at Pocono Manor last summer and he hopes that if any bander is in the neighborhood this summer they will look him up. The resort is so nearly primeval that its 3000 acres have not yet seen an English Sparrow, Starling or pigeon nesting there in 41 years.

TIPS ABOUT TRAPS

George Dock, Jr. of Scarsdale, N. Y., sends us his experiences with some kinds of traps in general use. We use direct quotes, slightly dusted off by the censor:

"I have tried the famed Fabian in all manner of likely spots and in some spots that were not so likely. Between us folks, it works best in my sector, by converting it into a sort of Modesto with a curved funnel entrance right on the ground level instead of the tunnel which constantly fills with rain water and defies any bird that is not a Merganser or a contortionist. In this manner I am getting more birds with it, especially Robins, Grackles and Doves. I use both feed and a water pan in this Fabian as lures, and it has worked well for Water-thrushes and even Yellow-throats. The good old Brenckle-Beals, Potters and False-bottoms really do most of the work at my station. The Cohasset is a poor performer here, although I have measured the 3 inch drop from lip to water with calipers to be sure that I followed instructions. Also just try to get a bird out of the Cohasset without chloroform, a crowbar and a gang of beaters recruited from the nearest kindergarten to drive the bird around to the side where the gathering cage squats hopefully."

In defense of all trapping equipment, it must be remembered that some traps will work fine in one place and be useless at another. Why this is true is unknown, but it is so. The suggested entrance for the Fabian sounds like a good idea and certainly should surmount the rain problem. What Mr. Dock says about the Cohasset has been substantiated by manner other banders, yet in certain places it works well. Each to his own taste, as the old lady said when she kissed the cow.

TO KEEP THEM DRIPPING

Rippling water is more attractive to birds than water that sits still. The common method of connecting rippling water with a trap, is to hang a bucket of water above a pan under a trap and let it drip. Dripping is caused in a number of ways, either by a petcock from a car radiator or gas stove, or by a nail hole in the bucket, etc. The "bug" in this control of the drip is that each has a tendency to clog. A cover on your water pail will keep the water cleaner and stop some clogging. Some have found that a larger hole in the bucket with a rag pulled thru tightly, will work better than any other way. The rag works as a wick and won't clog.

Last November, before Herbert Houston of Wayne, Pa. became a part of Uncle Sam's fighting forces, he sent EBBA a diagram of how he keeps his traps dripping. His system is almost the same as the one illustrated in the Dec., 1941 issue of the INLAND NEWS. For those who didn't see this illustration, EBBA will go over it lightly. The container is suspended over the trap in the usual manner with a glass tube immersed in the water. To the top of this tube, a small rubber hose is attached and so fastened that it will not kink as it goes over the top of the container and down in the direction of the pan below. The flow of water thru the tube is controlled by a laboratory clamp. To start the water flowing draw on the hose in the same manner as any other siphon. If properly arranged this set-up will not clog. EBBA has a length of rubber hose and a clamp which will be gladly sent to any bander who wishes to try this method in exchange for postage.

Dr. Wood reports M. J. Magee of Sault Ste. Marie uses a pipe on or under the surface of the ground with an elbow at the end. This elbow has a piece of brass or copper soldered over the end with a pinhole in it. He then has a hand valve to decrease the flow of water which makes a fountain an inch high in the middle of a concrete basin, built under the trap. This does away with "toting" water and uses very little, yet makes all the ripples needed.

Good advice with any water trap set up is keep your water dripping at all times and above all keep it clean.

MORE CANADIAN BANDING DATA

In addition to the interesting recoveries of birds banded by Dayton Murphy at Wellington, Ontario, listed in the May Issue of EBBA NUS, several more are tabulated below:

Blue-winged Teal Returns and Recoveries

- Banded Oct. 1, '38 - shot in Sargent County, N. D. by D. Carter, Oct. 5, '40
" Oct. 2, '38 - Returned to place of banding, Oct. 1 '39 & Sept. 1, '41
" Oct. 1, '38 - shot at Killarney, Manitoba by F. Stevenson, Sept. 16, '40
" Sept. 25 '40 - shot at Braddock's Bay, N. Y. by L. Buckley, Oct. 16, '40
" Oct. 1, '39 - shot at Puerto Padre, Oriente, Cuba by C. Ponte, Oct. 26, '40

Canada Goose

- Banded Apr. 26, '38 - killed by Eskimo in James Bay, date unknown.
" Apr. 26, '38 - shot at Mattamussett, N. C. by Mrs. J. W. Wilson, Nov. 2, '40

Black Duck

- Banded at Charles Mills Reservoir, Ashlund Co., Ohio on Dec. 23, '39 was shot at West Lake, near Wellington on Nov. 1, '40.

MORE ABOUT BANDING IN THE MERRY MONTH OF MAY

In tabulating the catch from the 5 banding stations in the New York area for the June issue of EBBA NUS, we regret that a bird of one more species was inadvertently omitted. This was a Downy Woodpecker banded by Beecher S. Bowdish and the only station to catch one in this particular period. It should also have been mentioned that the records for the Manhasset Junior Bird Banding Club were compiled through the courtesy of their member, Frank Sarnowski. Frank did a splendid job and deserves credit.

Richard Fischer, who operates a station within the limits of the area shown on the map in our June issue also had a big run of birds during May. Fischer is so busy teaching general science in Malvern, that we overlooked him. Trust him to band birds somehow, even if he has to get up in the middle of the night to do it. He reports that May 8 and 9 were record days at his station. On the 8th he trapped 30 new birds and next day he succeeded in taking 54 more. Highlights for the 2 days were 35 White-throats of which two-thirds were females, 17 Catbirds and 6 Scarlet Tanagers, 3 of each sex. On May 20th, young vandals visited his trapping area and destroyed 6 of his best traps including his famous 10-cell combination Potter and Top-opening trap. Rewards, police investigations and what-have-you failed to uncover the culprits, but more traps will rise from the ruins, if EBBA knows this bander.

HOW TO SHIP TICKS AND WHERE

Mrs. Leslie A. Stauber, our banding member who is interested in ticks found on birds, has moved from Port Norris, N. J. and material should now be sent to her in care of the Post Office, Stelton, N. J. Mrs. Stauber suggests that banders use care in collecting these "critters". First, for health's sake and secondly, so that the specimen can be studied when received. It is not necessary to crush or kill a tick to capture him. Place it in a small vial or a small tin container, such as contained aspirin tablets. If the tick starves to death in transit, no one will be deeply grieved. Ticks when present are usually found on the heads of birds.

WOULDN'T YOU KNOW IT WOULD HAPPEN?

On Feb. 7, 1943 Beecher S. Bowdish of Demarest, N. J. trapped a Myrtle Warbler wearing band No. 140-5535, and at once realized that it was a bird banded at some other station. The bird was captured TWICE the same day and the number recorded carefully, so he is sure there was no mistake in the reading. Mr. Bowdish reported this capture to Washington and was informed that the band had been issued to William Johnson of Knoxville, Tenn., but had not been reported as used, as yet. Letters to Mr. Johnson in regard to the recovery were returned by the postoffice for a better address. Finally, through the fine cooperation of the Tennessee Ornithological Society, Mr. Johnson was tracked down as living on R. F. D. 4, Knoxville. A letter from Mr. Johnson finally came back to Mr. Bowdish, stating that he had never banded a Myrtle Warbler in his life. Further more, he stated that he still had band No. 140-5535 in his possession. Gr-r-r-r. The only explanation for such a mystery is the thought that someone must have received and used an incorrectly numbered band. This case illustrates, why it is well for all banders to check the numbers of the bands they receive for duplication and errors, - a tedious task, but one that is very important. It is regretted that this record will probably forever remain incomplete, unless one of our readers can solve the riddle.

TWO MYSTERIES SOLVED, THANK YOU

In the May issue of the NUS, (Page 2 and 3) Blue Jay 37-302750 and Starling 40-258793 were reported as recovered in Flushing, L. I., N. Y., but their place and date of banding remained somewhat of a mystery. Through the good offices of our member, Chandler S. Robbins, formerly of Gorham, N. H. but now employed at the Patuxent Research Refuge, Bowie, Md., the records have been completed. Mr. Robbins while at the Bird Banding Office in Washington, looked up the records and forwarded them to us. The Blue Jay was banded on April 21, 1938, at Flushing by Robert Ralston. The Starling was also banded in Flushing on Nov. 19, 1941 by L. K. Hutton of Ulster Park, N. Y.

Mr. Robbins also informs us that a White-throat was captured at the Patuxent Refuge, Bowie, Md. on May 7, 1943, which was banded by William Wharton at Groton, Mass. on Sept. 26, 1942. Another contribution to the "White-throat Department" is relayed to EBBA by B. S. Bowdish. A member of this species banded by him at Demarest, N. J. on Nov. 9, 1942 was found dead Feb. 8, 1943 at Short Hills, N. J. by Mrs. H. E. Wilson.

COLOR BANDING OF SMALL BIRDS

All birds banded at the Patuxent Research Refuge, Bowie, Md. have a red celluloid band on the right leg and the usual band on the left. This applies to all small birds and should not be confused with color-banded gulls or herons. This same combination was used on about 125 Black-crowned Night Herons at Waltham, Mass. 3 or 4 years ago.

NEWS FOR THE BIRD BANDERS

Howard Mahnken of Brooklyn, N. Y., plans to teach science this fall in a school near Trenton, N. J. If he can find a good spot to band nearby, we can be sure that some more N. J. birds will be wearing bands.

Dr. Paul C. Gatterdam of the Gundersen Clinic, La Crosse, Wisconsin, is particularly interested in tips on the feeding and care of young hawks and owls. If the reader has any data on this, please pass it along.

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Sec. 562 P. L. & R.

"BUY WAR SAVINGS STAMPS AND BONDS"