

EBBA NEWS



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

REACHING
OVER
375
BANDERS
EVERY MONTH

January, 1944

"LET US BAND TOGETHER"

Vol. 7-No. 1

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WHO HAS THE OLDEST AGE RECORDS?

EBBA NEWS has been so successful with what we call "post-card co-operation" in the past several months, that we are going to seek another deluge of postals. This time we ask all members to consult their records and send in on a penny postal, their oldest age records of any birds they have banded. Such a record should contain the date of banding, the bird's age if known, such as fledgling, immature or adult and the date and place of the latest record. Some of these will be recoveries and some will be returns and should read something like this, for example:

Song Sparrow, ad. banded Bath, Me. 6/4/33 Returned to same station 5/28/40

or

Towhee, Im. banded 5/10/30, at Newton, N. J. Found dead at Two Trees, Fla. 1/6/37

EBBA'S reason for requesting this information is to get an up-to-date list of age records for as many species of birds as possible and to publish the names of the banders who hold in their files the oldest birds of each kind. From time to time it is our hope that banders will report to us such records as they come in, so that, John Jones may have banded the oldest Purple Grackle at the present time, but a year from now Frank Smith becomes the bander who banded the oldest Grackle.

A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME ---

Several members have expressed their dislike over the past year or so with the name of our news-letter. EBBA NUS, a manufactured title was considered a trifle "flip" and "smart aleck-y", to coin more words. All these faults have been admitted and some of the annoyance may arise from pronouncing NUS to rhyme with US, when it was intended to sound like USE. The name is awkward but it is short, one advantage. However, the name was changed to NEWS and now we have just as many complaints again, but from a different set of members. EBBA NEWS is too trite and common-place and it seems to be really correct it should be E.B.B.A. NEWS if we seriously want to be correct. Seriously speaking, it is not the intention of our news-letter to be too serious. It is intended as an informal medium through which all our members can know each other better and learn what other banders are doing. To nurture interest in banding and form contacts between each other is the reason for its being. "Ye Ed" is more concerned over its contents than a name, but it has been suggested that any and all members suggest a new name or names. Such a list of names to be placed before the entire membership and voted upon. These seem like a good thought. After all is said, the news-letter is yours, you members write it, with "Ye Ed" at the steering oar. Can you think of an attractive new name that is short and fits our little monthly?

HOW DO YOU CATCH JUNCOS?

A bander wrote to Chandler S. Robbins, now located at Bowie, Md. and requested information on the above question. Since Juncos have been very numerous this year and the reply was so interesting, EBBA quotes the answer Mr. Robbins sent to the bander.

"I have just been over our Junco schedules to see which traps we have had the best luck with. Out of 423 Juncos on which this information is readily available, 162 (38%) were taken in 2 modified Government Sparrow traps; 147 (35%) were taken in one-cell Potters (5 or 6 of these operating); 21 (5%) were taken in 1 two-cell Potter; 55 (13%) were taken in 1 four-cell Potter; 19 (4½%) were taken in a large mesh Mason trap intended for larger birds; and 19 (4½%) were taken in a large Potter-type trap about 14" on each side and operated with a pull string. This last trap was worked out during the Purple Finch invasion of 1939, -- we could drop the door at will and take 6 to 10 birds at once instead of wasting our time with single catches. It was far more efficient per square ft. of wire involved, than an ordinary drop trap. As far as I can make out from these figures, we took Juncos equally easy in every type of trap. If a Sparrow Trap counts as 5 units, (EBBA, Sept. '43), it should be approximately equal to 5 one-cell Potters: 38% for the former, and 35% for the latter show this to hold very well in this case. Neither our 4-cell nor our 2-cell was in continuous operation during this period, so their totals are lower than would be expected."

"The only bait we have used for Juncos is a commercial mixture distributed by the Audubon Society, or by local seed companies (hemp, cracked corn, millet peanut hearts, etc.) We have not tried water on Juncos at all." (Gorham, Mass.)

"Our percentage of returns on Juncos has been quite low, being at present 21 birds or about 5%. Most of these returned a year following the banding but a bird banded in '37 and one from '38 was retaken in 1940."

"We have banded practically 300 of them this fall at Bowie, Md. To be sure we have 30 traps in operation; perhaps we should have banded twice that many, but we have been concentrating our efforts on White-throats so the best traps have not been in the best spots for Juncos. We have taken a few on water here at Bowie, but the great majority have been taken on grain -- just whatever stuff we could lay our hands on; for a while this was nothing but wheat; then cracked corn; then a mixture of cracked corn, cracked soy beans, and wheat; now we are using a mixture of a great variety of seeds (small quantities of each species) which have been used for experimental or study purposes at the Patuxent Research Refuge. We often do not know from one week to the next what we will be able to get hold of. But practically everything seems to work. Of course, Juncos don't go into the traps the way White-throats or Chippies will, but they don't appear to be very particular as to bait or type of entrance. Ground entrances such as Potter, Sparrow, Mason or Fabian seem slightly preferable to top entrances."

"The only suggestion I can make to a bander would be to try a large drop trap. We are using one three foot square, held up by a stick 10 inches long in the middle of the front side. Juncos seem to go into this trap more readily than the others because it is open on three sides. IF you have the wire, it might pay to make it even larger -- perhaps 4½ ft. wide and 3 ft. long. We are thinking a larger one here."

Chandler S. Robbins, Bowie, Md.

REMEMBER

1944 dues are now due. Please make your remittance to the treasurer, whose address appears on the front page. We can't afford to carry members not in good standing.

WHITE-THROATS RETURNING IN THE SOUTH

Prof. Robert Ware of the Clemson State Agricultural College, Clemson, S. C. is catching lots of White-throats and is averaging about three true returns a week, which is really something. He writes that on Christmas day they had a sleet storm and banding was particularly good. We are receiving weekly postals from him keeping us abreast of his many returns and any day now we hope to hear that he has caught some other bander's bird in his traps. Some of his White-throat returns are several years old and this material makes a splendid addition the wealth of material now being prepared for a formal paper.

BACK NUMBERS OF EBBA NEWS

For those members who file away their issues of EBBA NEWS and would like to complete a set or perhaps get sets issued previous to their membership, we are glad to announce that we still have a few back numbers. Single copies of any month during the last three years are now 10 cents each. Complete volumes for 1941, 1942 or 1943 are \$1.20 each. Two complete volumes in a ring binder, either 1940 & 1941, 1941 & 1942 or 1942 & 1943 are \$3.00 each. All shipped postage paid.

Through the generosity of Keahon Garland of Demarest, N. J. we also have some old issues of "Bird Banding Notes". Some of these are rather scarce and anyone interested in completing their file of this mimeograph publication should write "Te. Ed".

NEWS FOR THE BANDERS

At the 47th annual meeting of the N. Y. State Science Teachers' Assn., held in Albany, N. Y. on Dec. 28 to 30, Frank W. Trevor of the Millbrook School, Millbrook, N. Y. gave a paper, "Biology During War Time". Mr. Trevor will be remembered as the bander who had one of his birds recovered in Iceland a year or so ago.

Donald C. Peattie had an interesting story on birds and banding in the November "Rotarian" entitled "Feathered Ambassadors". This article gives the South American local names of many of the birds banded at our stations.

Howard Mahken now at Lambertville, N. J. writes that he has finally enticed some N. J. birds into his traps and has now started banding at his new location.

Raymond T. Fuller of Winterton, N. Y. writes that he has made a big improvement on his "Improved Government Sparrow Traps". This improvement consists of a piece of hardware cloth, 6 inches wide and as long as the width of the main entrance. The wire is bent in the shape of an "L", each arm being 3 inches deep. This piece of wire cloth is then inverted and attached to the trap in front of the main entrance somewhat like a little covered porch. Birds then enter from each side and once in the main entrance, they are more apt to enter the trap than to back out of the entrance and escape. Mr. Fuller reports by these means he has bigger catches at one time than he formerly caught.

Jesse V. Miller of New Hyde Park, N. Y., reports a "Banner" banding year for 1943. States he has the biggest total ever banded and several sub-stations really active and working consistently. Cat and squirrel trouble were overcome by transportation and some success was achieved with some cripple birds brought in, although a great many were beyond saving.

MORE COOPERATION ESSENTIAL AMONG BIRD BANDERS

Bird Banding is recognized as one of the four methods of scientific-ornithological study, and of comparable importance to the study of birds in the bush, dead birds in the hand or live birds in captivity. Each method gives its own particular opportunities, each yields its own reward. Success comes through cooperative effort, by finding out what others are doing. Therefore, the serious bird bander desires to know more of the work and results of other ornithologists who are working in other channels of bird study. This information is gathered by personal associations with others and from their reports in other publications than those of the banding organizations. EBBA members are urged to support the local publications of their own states, many of which are named after various birds. It is our duty, as far as we are able, to support the magazine "Bird Banding."

Membership in the American Ornithologists' Union gives prestige, as well as knowledge and an opportunity to report one's work, or notes, in the leading publication of its kind in the world. Only 42 percent of the members of the EBBA belong to the A.O.U.; only 33 percent of the total members of the four banding associations have joined the A.O.U.

Membership in the four bird banding associations can and should be augmented very markedly. There are approximately 1700 names on the list of bird banding cooperators of the Fish and Wildlife Service, representing potential, rather than active banders. The total membership of the four banding associations is approximately 657, or only about 38 percent of the bird banders have joined these organizations. It is the duty, and perhaps the opportunity of each member to induce somebody else to join. With no doubt, the greater the size of an organization, the greater can be its usefulness to the country as a whole and to the individual member. Each of the associations has been doing excellent work, which deserves wider recognition than is shown by the enrollments. Each association needs more members, but categorically, each unaffiliated bander could receive profit from these associations. The membership lists of the four banding associations, the EBBA, IBBA and WBBA are remarkably close in enrollment; to wit, 140, 175, 189 and 153 members respectively, according to the latest reports.

Any EBBA member contemplating joining the American Ornithologist Union should communicate with Dr. Lawrence E. Hicks, Secretary, Ohio Wildlife Research Station, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.

Dr. Harold B. Wood, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

NEWS FOR THE BIRD BANDERS

A female adult Robin banded by B. S. Bowdish at Demarest, N. J. on Nov. 11, 1942 was "taken" at Whiteville, N. C. Jan. 23, 1943.

The November, 1943 news-letter of the Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania, thanks to the president Hal H. Harrison, gave the Bird Saving Lantern a nice little boost and thereby assisted EBBA'S treasury.

Father Fabian Kekich is no longer at the Capuchin College, Brooklands, Washington, D. C. and this splendid station noted for its large catch of warblers is at present inactive.

Edwin A. Mason, formerly of Groton, Mass. (The Wharton Bird Banding Sta.) is now located at the Landon School for Boys, Edgemoor, Washington, D. C. He writes that he has traps and bands with him and is already to band as soon as he gets an opportunity.

TWO MORE RED-TAILS BANDED

Ralph E. Wetzel of Boiling Springs, Pa., writes: "Two pupils of mine. (I'm a school teacher) trapping for skunks, caught a hawk. Knowing of my banding activities, it was brought to me. Not having a band, I borrowed one from "Prexy" Harold B. Wood. A dandy specimen of Red-tailed Hawk now wears this band. The next day, these same boys caught another bird of the same species, in the same trap. This second hawk was brought to me. It, too, is now a member of the elite "Banded" hawks. --- It pays, as this example shows, to make friends with youth. Youth then helps with a hobby, and learns valuable lessons about wildlife." All of us will echo Mr. Wetzel's sentiments.

BANK SWALLOWS CHANGE MATES

The entire Oct. issue of "Feathers" published by the Schenectady Bird Club, is given over to a very interesting paper by Dr. Dayton Stoner, of Albany, N. Y., entitled "Bank Swallow Banding Near Albany, N. Y." Among the conclusions is this statement: "In none ---- of our 272 return Bank Swallows have we ever found a bird with the same mate in two seasons." Interested banders should write Dr. Stoner, in care of the N. Y. State Museum for a copy of this paper.

PIPING PLOVER SHOW MORE CONSTANCY IN MATING

In a recent letter from LeRoy Wilcox of Speonk, L. I., N. Y. he states: "I started banding operations on Piping Plover this year on May 15th when I found 17 nests, (four fell in the first hour) in 7 1/2 hours. Besides searching for nests I trapped 7 adults on their nests (5 of them were returns). The band on one bird was worn thin, nearly ready to drop off, so I put a new band on it. This bird was banded when young in 1938 and I have trapped it in 1940, 1941, 1942, and 1943. It was an adult male mated to Female 40-155211 in 1940. In 1941, '42, '43, it was mated to 39-187879. All nests in all 4 years were within a few feet of each other, so in this case the male chose the locality.

I only made the one trip to the beach this year as the following week the pleasure ban on driving was put into effect. Did not band any Ospreys or Terns this year, -- about the only year I have ever missed these birds since I had a banding license." (17 years--Ed.)

OUR GUESS WITHIN 4,000 WHITE-THROATS

Remember, in the Oct. issue we guessed that the number of White-throated Sparrows banded in 20 years, from 1920 to 1940 was 200,000. Shucks, - we were wrong. Official Washington figures sets the total at 196,054. The total thru the spring of 1943 makes a grand total of 227,344 White-throats banded so far. 1939 and '40 were big years when well over 20,000 were banded in each of the Federal fiscal years.

HISTORY OF BIRD BANDING

Who knows any dates, with other information, of bird banding being done anywhere before 1900? Please send all information, including dates, name of person placing marker on bird, species, place of banding and especially reference or authority from whom the information is obtained. Send this to Harold B. Wood, (Address on front page). Earliest dates so far learned are 1669, 1710, 1773, 1803, 1889. After all material is received a paper on the subject will be prepared.

"The Way of a Man With Eagles" is one of the best pieces of banding publicity we have seen in a long time. Written by John Kieran in his column, "One Small Voice" it appeared in the N. Y. Sun of Dec. 1st, 1943.

Sec. 562 P. L. & R.



DR. DAYTON STONER
NEW YORK STATE MUSEUM
ALBANY, N. Y.