


# EBBA NEWS

Dan Storer  
4/20/44  


REACHING  
OVER  
**375**  
BANDERS  
EVERY MONTH

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

April, 1944

"LET US BAND TOGETHER"

Vol. 7 No. 4

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## "JOE" HICKEY IN THE NEWS AGAIN

The John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation has recently appropriated a special fund of \$200,000 from which fellowships will be granted solely to men and women who are serving the nation at war. The awards will be made before the end of the war and will be waiting for the recipients on their release from active duty.

The first five fellows have already been chosen. Among these first five is the name of Joseph Hickey, ornithologist, author, former track star and may we add, a former officer and present member of EBBA. "Joe" today, is concentrating on war research and will be aided by this fellowship to analyze problems in conservation of bird life.

## BANDER HOUSTON IS NOW LIEUTENANT HOUSTON

Word has been received that the Army Air Force Bombardier-Navigation School at Deming, N. M. held graduation exercises for the class of '44-45 on April 1st. Cadet Herbert Arnold Houston, former bander is now Lieutenant Houston of the Army Air Force. The graduation was scheduled for April 8th, but because of a special army order it actually took place on April 1st, a sort of April fool's joke on Tojo and Hitler. All members of EBBA join in wishing Lt. Houston Happy Landings.

## A VERY INTERESTING ISSUE

The Arbor Day and Bird Day issue of the N. Y. State Bulletin to the Schools has just arrived and although past issues have been exceptionally interesting, the current issue exceeds all records. Possibly EBBA'S enthusiasm is colored by the fact that so many of our members contributed photographs and articles. Among the writers we note Raymond T. Fuller of Winterton; Prof. Dayton Stoner of Albany; Lawrence Howe of Belmont; Malcolm J. Lerch of Penn Yan and LeRoy Wilcox of Speonk, L. I. The booklet contains a wealth of bird topics from Fish Hawks to Sparrows and many other items, suggestions etc., as to trees, flower sanctuaries and such subjects. All members will find it of interest and it is recommended that they send ten cents to the N. Y. State Education Department, Albany, N. Y. and ask for Number 7, Vol. 30.

Remember: The best traps in the world will not help you to band birds if stored in the attic, cellar or your garage. Get them out, set them up in a likely place and keep the bands flying. The banders now in the armed services look to us at home to keep banding going.

## MANHASSET MAKES NICE RECORD FOR 1943

A report recently received, gives the total of the birds banded by the Manhasset Junior Bird Banding Club, of Manhasset, L. I., N. Y., which breaks all their former records. A total of 867 new birds were banded and 24 birds banded in the previous 3 years were taken. Of the 1943 total banded, Slate-colored Juncos headed the list with 198 individuals, followed by White-throats, 109; Purple Grackles, 100; Song Sparrows 97; Catbirds 75; Blue Jay 59; Brown Thrasher 40; Robin 30 and 26 other species in smaller numbers. Surprises on the list are 2 Purple Finches and a White-crowned Sparrow and the omissions of the Blue-wing Warblers and Golden crowned Kinglet.

The main part of this club's banding activities are confined to the school year, however it is doubtful whether continued banding through July and August would have made very much difference in the yearly total. Numerous sub-stations have now been set up and it is hoped that work at these scattered stations will prove of interest, not alone by taking a greater number of individuals of the different species, but also will supply data on the movement of birds in the general area.

This Junior Banding Club is under the direct supervision of Jesse V. Miller, one of EBBA'S councilors, who also conducts a banding station at his home in New Hyde Park, about 6 miles south of Manhasset.

### MOCKINGBIRD BANDED AT HEMPSTEAD, N. Y.

"Dick" Fischer writes that a friend of his reported a Mockingbird as a regular visitor at a feeding station in Hempstead, L. I., N. Y., ever since the middle of February. "Dick" being the bander he is, at once made plans to band this visitor. Attempt after attempt failed, but finally on March 26th, this southern songster was captured in a drop trap. It now wears one of Dick's bands and makes a total of 100 species of birds banded by this member.

### NOTES FROM HERE AND THERE

Raymond T. Fuller of Winterton, N. Y. reports that since Jan. 1, '44, he has banded 60 Slate-colored Juncos. Of this total 51 were plainly males. It is his thought that most of the Juncos he is catching have come from not very far south of his station. Where the females are is a mystery. At "Ye Ed's" station the same ratio of sexes seems to occur. While only about 30 have been trapped in the same period, the proportion of males is just as high. Are any banders catching females of this species in greater numbers than the very dark males?

After many promises that didn't materialize, the students of the school where Howard Mahnken teaches at Lambertville, N. J., finally brought in a live Red-tailed Hawk, which had been caught in a steel trap. The hawk was banded and released in apparently good shape. Patience and persistence bring their rewards and it is hoped the Mahnken can keep his students interested in these fine "assists".

Elsewhere in this issue there are comments on the Fox Sparrow flight in New York and New Jersey. A late item that has just come to hand that should be placed with these comments is word from Mrs. Marie Dumont of Pequannock, N. J. Mrs. Dumont writes that from March 21st to the 26th, she banded 43 Fox Sparrows. Mr. R. T. Fuller of Winterton, N. Y. reports a good size flock of them March 16th, singing the 17th and practically all gone by April 1st although he banded two, apparently females and all alone, one on April 2nd, and one on the 7th.

## FOX SPARROWS BUCK LATE STORM

The snow storm along the Atlantic Coast on March 20th caught a large flight of Fox Sparrows in Northern New Jersey and Southern New York. Reports coming in from these areas give a graphic tale of the "Little Red Foxes" trials and tribulations. Paragraphs from letters tell the story.

Mrs. Herbert E. Carnes, Tenafly, N. J.: "My first really big banding day was March 20th, the day of the storm. Fox Sparrows all over the place, although on the 19th I took only one, on Monday took 20. Song Sparrows, Juncos and others managed to completely exhaust my supply of bands with 66 as a total for the day. At 4:40 I closed down the traps, opening everything wide and put out a last high supply of food. Never in my life have I seen so many birds in one area."

Beecher Bowdish, Demarest, N. J. (2 mi. further north): "Today, (Mar. 20) I stayed home to look after the traps and food supply of our numerous bird host. I let them feed for some time unmolested, after I had got things so arranged that they had a chance at a feast in a number of protected spots. I laid off trapping in the middle of the day and cut off again early in the afternoon, so as to give them an undisturbed chance to fill up, which I believe they certainly needed. I saw a Fox Sparrow which didn't seem too husky and a Song Sparrow in one of the traps seemed down and out. When I released it he could not get out of the snow, so I took him in and Mrs. Bowdish nursed him, but he soon died. I believe that the terrible weather was responsible for these bird conditions."

"Banded 20 birds for the day: 9 Fox, 8 Song and 1 Tree Sparrow and 4 Juncos. Could without a doubt, boosted the count considerably but it would have given the birds a hard deal, which I was not willing to do. Also got as returns, a '42 Song Sparrow, a '42 Junco and a '39 Blue Jay."

Later: "The wave of birds that came with the snowstorm waned Mar. 25th and had disappeared the next day. Banded 42 Fox Sparrows on the 21st and 27 on the 25th but only banded 2 today (Mar. 26th)" Mr. Bowdish speaks of taking a Fox return also on the 21st and undoubtedly for the entire week his total of "Foxes" banded is substantial.

William Carr, curator of the Trailside Museum at Bear Mt. Park, N. Y. reported that the snowstorm forced down some 5,000 Fox Sparrows in the Park. Although about 500 pounds of feed was distributed, numbers of the birds were found dead. (Any banded, Bill?) A large flock of Canada Geese, heading north, appeared to have become completely disorganized by the same storm. Geese were found all over the roads and on Hessian Lake.

## AN INTER-STATION RESCUE

Elsewhere in this issue, the reader will find some discussion in regard to "bridging" the gaps in the record book. An illustration of what is meant "pops up" in current correspondence: Beecher Bowdish banded 2 juvenal Titmice on June 30, '43. One repeated fairly constantly at the station but the other was never trapped again. On March 14th, the missing Titmouse was trapped by Mrs. H. E. Carnes at her station about 2 miles south of the original place of banding. Probably this banding report would have forever remained blank if Mrs. Carnes had not become a bander within the near vicinity. It is the thought that many of our banded birds are still alive but out of the customary range of our banding stations unless we occasionally go out after them.

MORE DATA ON AGE RECORDS - Third List

Starting in our February issue, EBBA began to publish the longest life records of banded birds from among the files of our members and the members of our sister association, INLAND. Before we got very far, we worked ourselves up into a froth over who had the oldest record for a Downy Woodpecker. There were submitted 4 separate records, all of male Downies that were about 8 years old. In desperation we called for a record of a 9 year-old Downy to settle the whole matter. EBBA went as far as to write to several of the more experienced banders to see if they couldn't dig up such a bird in their books. "Beech" S. Bowdish of Demarest, N. J. replied at the time that "there ain't no such animal". EBBA was beginning to subscribe to this belief, but to just show you that the unexpected always happens, Bander Bowdish comes through with a record that tops our best expectations.

He writes, "Yesterday, (March 19, 1944) I noticed a male Downy in one of my smallest traps, wearing a bright and shiny band. The inscription on the band was 34-139282 and the band was worn so thin and had such a knife edge toward the foot that I replaced it with 42-199549 before releasing it. I checked his origin, as far as I have to do with it, and found that he was banded as a juvenal, August 26, 1934. So, if he lives for another five months with his apparent vim and vigor, he'll be a 10 year-old bird."

Congratulations are in order we believe. Beecher S. Bowdish now possesses the oldest age record of a banded Male Downy Woodpecker. It is notable that all the old age records for this species so far reported have had to do with the males. Who has an old age record for a lady woodpecker or are lady Woodpecker's ages taboo?

-----CHANGES IN OLD AGE RECORDS-----

| <u>Place of Banding</u>      | <u>Bander</u>  | <u>Date</u> | <u>Return or Recovery</u> | <u>Age</u>  |
|------------------------------|----------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| CATBIRD<br>Blud Island, Ill. | F.C.Labahn Jr. | 5/8/34      | 9/26/42 same              | 9yrs. 3mos. |

-----NEW AGE RECORDS-----

|                                               |                 |          |          |                       |              |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------|----------|-----------------------|--------------|
| GANNET<br>Bonaventure I., Que.                | W.M. Duval      | 9/2/24   | 12/16/33 | Rockaway Pt., L.I.N.Y | 9yrs. 6mos.  |
| MALLARD<br>Portage des Sioux, Mo.             | John Broeker    | 3/27/24  | 11/22/33 | Kaskaskia I. Illinois | 10yrs. 5mos. |
| RED HEADED<br>WOODPECKER<br>Blue Island, Ill. | F.C.Labahn, Jr. | 11/30/33 | 5/12/38  | same                  | 4yrs. 11mos. |
| BRONZE GRACKLE<br>Indianapolis, Ind.          | S.E.Perkins III | 6/26/25  | 3/21/34  | same                  | 8yrs. 9mos.  |
| PURPLE FINCH<br>Northeast Harbor, Me.         | Mrs. E. Morgan  | 6/21/24  | 4/28/33  | Bar Harbor, Me.       | 8yrs. 10mos. |

It also might be mentioned that two more additional records of Blue Jays living 12 years have also come to light. One of these was banded at Hartford, Conn. and was still thereabouts 12 years later. The other was banded at Ann Arbor, Mich. on Jan. 1, 1922 and was retrapped again Nov. 17, 1933 near the same place.

This listing needs some old Brown Thrasher records. Some of 5 years or so have appeared, but it seems certain that there are better records available.

## "BRIDGING" THE BLANKS IN YOUR RECORDS

As every bander knows, after banding a short time, there are a large number of birds banded and appearing on the records which have never again appeared in the traps. The thought arises, "Where do these birds go?" -- "Could they be dead?" Such birds are not alone the migrants, but many can be classed as residents or at least summer residents or nearby areas.

It will also be noted from nearly ever bander's files, that a certain number of his banded birds are found dead within a mile or two of his place of banding, anywhere from a month to years after they were banded. Such discoveries amount to a considerable part of his recoveries. With what banders have learned of the territorial habit among birds and their occasional side-trips, it would appear that many banded birds are still around, but are resident just far enough away from the home station to prevent recapture and subsequent trap records. Another class of birds in this same category are the immatures and fledglings that we band each summer. Few are retrapped, but may have taken up residence at no great distance from the banding station in years following banding.

To increase the number of birds "heard from", subsequent to banding, it is suggested that banders attempt to "bridge" these blanks in their records, by an occasional banding side trip with a few light traps that can be easily carried for a mile or so. When going after birds, as some banders already do, it is best and less disappointing to make such an excursion to a place where some success is assured. Such a place is the home of a friend or neighbor who feeds birds in their garden. Traps then can be placed at spots at which birds have been habitually fed or where they bathe and are sure to visit. If banded birds are caught, so much the better, but even if unbanded birds are caught, it adds to the future possibilities at some other spot. It should be born in mind that such trips should always be in addition to banding at your home station. It is important that the home station be operated on as near a daily schedule as time will allow.

Such side expeditions will help banding in another way. The friends visited by the bander and his traps, may know about banding, but by actually conducting banding operations before their own eyes, all the benefits of visual education are acquired. In another way, such operations will also help. If there are some banded birds moving around this neighbor's yard, he or she is bound to notice them from time to time, take more interest in a banded bird and perhaps call the attention of visitors at their home to the banded bird's presence. In this way, banding education is spread to more and more people and the chances of a recovery being reported is enhanced. Why not try a side trip or two to some neighboring friend of birds with a trap or two? You can't lose.

### NEWS FOR THE BIRD BANDERS

Mrs. Herbert E. Carnes of 25 Kenwood Rd., Tenafly, N. J., would like to purchase E. H. Forbush's 3 vol. edition of "Birds of Massachusetts & Other New England States"; A. C. Bent's "Life Histories of North American Birds of Prey" #170, Part 2; G. M. Allen's "Birds and Their Attributes" and Francis Kortright's "Ducks, Geese and Swans of North America". Mrs. Carnes is a bird student and not a book collector. She would like to know where these books can be acquired, regardless of condition.

Rev. Edward Stoehr of Pittsburgh, Pa. reports banding 160 birds in the first 6 weeks his new station has been in operation. He now has 6 traps and hopes to have 6 more after Easter. Of 37 Cardinals trapped, 19 were females and 18 males. "A welcome snow, March 5th, "He writes, "enabled me to handle 7 of the Horned Larks for the first time. They were playing around our ball diamond. I caught them at 3rd base, before they 'stole home' to the north."

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