

station here and forwarded to him at the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy, Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he was conducting his investigations. Professor Sushkin regards the various races of *Hesperiphona v. vespertina* as belonging to the Hawfinch group with its nearest relatives occurring in the Hinalo-Tibetan Zoögeographic Province. Professor Sushkins findings were published in *The Auk*, Vol. XLII, 1925, pp. 256-261.

Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan,
March 18, 1928

EDWARD HOWE FORBUSH

BY JOHN B. MAY, M.D.

THE achievement of three score years and ten is a notable event in the life of any man and the seventieth milestone cannot be passed without some recognition.

Edward Howe Forbush, the first president of the New England (later the Northeastern) Bird Banding Association, was born in Quincy, Massachusetts, on April 24, 1858, the son of Leander Pomeroy Forbush and Ruth Hudson (Carr) Forbush. He comes of sturdy New England ancestry, the first Forbush or Forbes having settled in Cambridge before 1660.

While still at a tender age, his appetite for exploration and adventure became evident, and he had already attempted an exploration of unknown waters, his craft a discarded packing box and his paddle a broken board, before he was seven years old, at which time his family removed from Quincy to West Roxbury.

In 1865 West Roxbury was still a farming region, with considerable areas of woodlands still persisting, and here the boy's outdoor tastes and his love for wild life developed apace. Aside from school hours, a great deal of his time was given up to exploring the woods and fields with their myriads of interesting inhabitants. He became an omnivorous reader of outdoor books, and began to shape his life work at that time. He studied drawing and modeling, and at the age of fourteen taught himself taxidermy. About this time his family moved again, to Worcester, where he became a member of the Worcester Natural History Society, and his studies and field trips began to show results in the form of printed articles on birds.



EDWARD HOWE FORBUSH

When he was nineteen years old he spent several months with a friend, exploring and collecting in Florida, at that time a veritable paradise for the naturalist. This was the first of many scientific journeys to be made, in the course of which he visited practically every state east of the Mississippi, the northern states to Washington, and much of Canada. His thirtieth year found him on the Pacific Coast, living a most adventurous life with Indians, trappers and fishermen, while he traveled the rugged shores of Washington Territory and British Columbia in search of natural history specimens. It was during this trip, in September, 1888, that he obtained the first specimens of a new race of the Lincoln Sparrow, which was later described and named for him, by his friend, William Brewster.

In 1893, Mr. Forbush was appointed Ornithologist to the Massachusetts State Board of Agriculture, in recognition of his work in economic ornithology. His researches on the value of birds to agriculture, horticulture and forestry, led to increased appreciation, and in 1908 the official title of State Ornithologist was conferred upon him by the Board. In 1921, he became the first Director of the Division of Ornithology, following the reorganization of the various state boards and commissions, and it is from this position that he retires this month, having reached the age at which retirement is compulsory under the Acts of the Massachusetts Legislature.

For thirty five years, then, Mr. Forbush has been the official ornithologist of Massachusetts, under one title or another. He is a member of many scientific and conservation societies. He became an associate member of the American Ornithologists Union in 1887, and was later elected a Member, then a Fellow, of that organization. He is a Life Member and former President of the Worcester Natural History Association; a Founder, and for twelve years President of the Massachusetts Audubon Society; he was for many years a corresponding member of the Nuttall Ornithological Club, and he is field agent for New England of the National Association of Audubon Societies.

Always farseeing and progressive, Mr. Forbush was quick to see the many possibilities for the advancement of ornithology through bird banding. When the New England Bird Banding Association was formed, he was selected as the logical choice for its first president, and his interest did much to determine its place among ornithological organizations. As soon as the Association was firmly established, however, with characteristic modesty, he refused re-election. He has maintained his

interest, however, and his office at the State House has served as a clearing house for bird banding information. His monthly bulletin, "Items of Interest," published by the State Department of Agriculture, contains notes of value to bird banders in every issue, and he has also contributed to the pages of the *Bulletin* of the Northeastern Bird Banding Association, articles of much timely import.

It is therefore most fitting that the Association, through its Officers and Council, should extend to Edward Howe Forbush, its heartiest congratulations and good wishes on the occasion of his approaching anniversary.

TREE SPARROWS RETURNING RATIOS

BY CHARLES L. WHITTLE

In past numbers of the *Bulletin* I have published so much of the history of a year's captures of Purple Finches and Catbirds as is revealed by returns for a succession of years. The matter is discussed under the headings "Returning Ratios" and "Survival Ratios." See the *Bulletins*, Vol. II, No. 2, p. 49, and Vol. III, No. 3, pp. 58 and 59. These ratios had to do with species returning to their nesting-grounds.

During the present winter season (1927-28) I have secured similar ratios of some interest of a species, the Tree Sparrow (*Spizella m. monticola*), returning to its wintering-grounds, and while the history is perhaps not completed for the present season (1927-28), it seems best to place the facts on record. This record is given in a condensed form in the following table:

Band No.	Date of Banding	Returns in winter season		
		1926-27	1927-28	
A18285	Jan. 30, 1926	Jan. 12, 1927		
A26625	Feb. 4, 1926	Dec. 7, 1926	Jan. 29, 1928	Return-2
A26725	Feb. 5, 1926	Jan. 16, 1927	Jan. 29, 1928	Return-2
A26730	Feb. 8, 1926		Jan. 29, 1928	Return-1
A26734	Feb. 6, 1926	Dec. 8, 1926	Mar. 11, 1928	Return-2
A26739	Feb. 7, 1926	Jan. 16, 1927		
A26784	Mar. 7, 1926	Jan. 16, 1927	Feb. 18, 1928	Return-2

The six returns-1 recorded in the winter season of 1926-27 represent fifty per cent of the twelve Tree Sparrows banded the previous season. It should be stated, however, that thir-