

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-

teen birds were originally banded, though one did not survive to go north with its associates. Of the six returns-1 in 1926-27, four were again recorded as returns-2 in 1927-28, or 33.33 per cent of the original number, and 66.66 per cent of the returns-1 recorded the previous season. One return-1 was recorded in 1927-28 not recorded in 1926-27, so that at least 41.66 per cent of the original twelve survived until the present season.

These returns bring out the fact that this species strongly tends to return each winter season to its wintering-place of the year before. The ratios, of course, do not necessarily mean that all of the original twelve Tree Sparrows that were alive and could have come necessarily did so, but this sort of statistical data collected from many stations year after year will in time give much more dependable ratios than are available at present.

Bird-banding is rapidly accumulating data showing that nesting birds do indeed return to their old breeding-places to nest, thus supporting the view long held by many, but it was not expected that banding would show that birds also return to their old wintering-places year after year and there spend the winter in a very restricted area. Each year's banding records, however, add to the list of species possessing this habit.

Reference has already been made (see the *Bulletin*, Vol. III, 1927, p. 13) to the possibility that a failure to record Tree Sparrows in winter-time at a station during the succeeding wintering-seasons may not mean that the birds are not passing the winter close to the station, as will appear from the following experiences: The present winter season at Colhasset up to February 16, 1928, has been unusually warm and free from snow, no snow falling until January 29th. Had the conditions obtaining up to that date continued throughout the winter, it is doubtful if I should have had any returning Tree Sparrows. Up to January 29th, only one banded Tree Sparrow had been seen at my station, and only on one or two occasions, but early on the snowy morning of the 29th six Tree Sparrows appeared, among which were three sight returns, a fourth one being identified a few days afterwards. On the 15th and 16th of February the weather was again warm and the ground was once more free from snow, with the result that no Tree Sparrows whatever came to the station during these days. From these observations it appears fairly certain that the returns were wintering close by, that they were finding an ample natural food-supply available, and that all the winter season previous to January 29th the birds had knowledge of the existence of the food-supply at my banding

station, which was immediately visited when the thick mantle of snow made their natural food-supply inadequate.

Cohasset, Massachusetts  
March 11, 1928

## REPORT OF THE RECORDING SECRETARY OF THE NORTHEASTERN BIRD-BANDING ASSOCIATION

ALICE B. HARRINGTON

THE record of birds banded during the year 1927 is as follows:

Number of birds banded	13,128
Returns taken	523

Species having largest number of returns:

Purple Finch	139
Chipping Sparrow	68
Tree Sparrow	58
Song Sparrow	49

Names of members who have banded the largest number of birds and those having had the largest number of returns during 1927:

Name	Stations	No. Banded	Re- turns	Recor- eries
Charles B. Floyd	Chatham and Auburndale Mass.	4791		4
William P. Wharton	Groton, Mass., and Sum- merville, South Carolina	950	39	
Charles L. Whittle	Cohasset, Mass.	556	87 <sup>1</sup>	
Rev. George A. Allen	Whitinsville, Mass.	482		
Mrs. Helen G. Whittle	Peterboro, New Hamp- shire	475	102 <sup>1</sup>	
Harry E. Woods	Chester, Mass.	457		5
Rev. Eugene Goellner	Manchester, New Hamp- shire	391	20	
Allan Keniston	Vineyard Haven, Mass.	353	21	
George D. Eustis	Chilmark, Mass.	314	18	
Mrs. H. C. Dunham	Wellesley, Mass.	311	28	
Mrs. Richard B. Harding	Cohasset, Mass., and Hol- derness, New Hampshire	258	57	
Miss Cora M. Teot	New Haven, Connecticut	230	24	
E. C. Weeks	Sanbornton, New Hamp- shire	230	22	

<sup>1</sup>Mr. and Mrs. Whittle's "returns" comprise only those birds which between takings made their seasonal migrations to their wintering or nesting grounds and came back to their place of banding.—EDITOR.