

The only wintry aspect was a gently falling thermometer.

The movement undoubtedly began in the north and passed southward, ceasing to the south of Sullivan Lake, although conditions there were almost identical with those farther north. It is difficult to escape the impression that the birds evinced sensitivity and response to latitude.

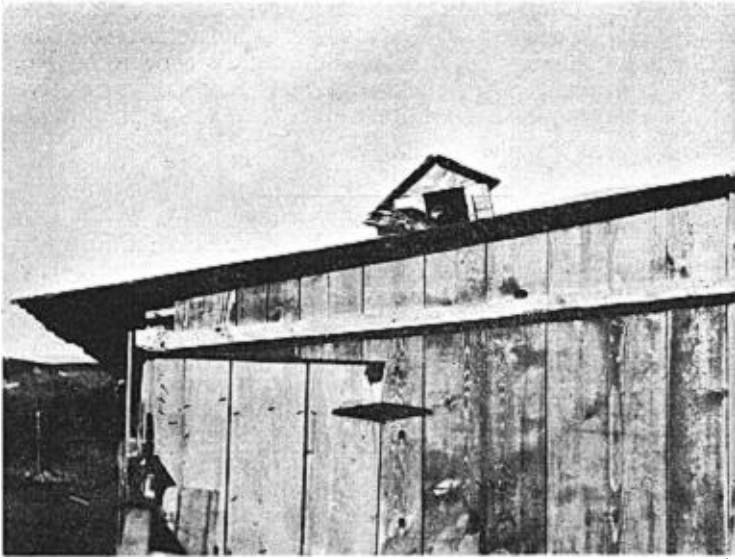
AN UNUSUAL MALLARD RETURN

By FREDERICK C. LINCOLN

DURING the summer of 1927 a Mallard duck selected as a site for her nest a box placed on the roof of a barn on the ranch of F. J. Keller, of Antioch, Nebraska. On November 29, 1927, she was caught by Mr. Keller, together with several of her offspring and associates, and was given Biological Survey band No. 555414. Before the end of the shooting season then in progress, members of this flock were reported from Colorado, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Texas, and Louisiana.

No. 555414 escaped, however, and on March 12, 1928, she reported back to her home station, and again nested in the box on the roof of Mr. Keller's barn. Before leaving in the fall she entered Mr. Keller's trap and was recorded on October 14, although she was not definitely checked out for the season until December 6. During the hunting season of 1928-29, ducks banded by Mr. Keller were reported from Swan Lake, South Dakota; Kit Carson, Colorado; the Gila River, Arizona; Boynton, Oklahoma; and Engelo, Texas. As these records of birds banded at Antioch began to come in, much interest was naturally aroused as to whether No. 555414 would be heard from. But again she escaped.

At 2:00 p.m. on March 10, 1929, Mr. Keller observed six Mallards that dropped into the pond near his windmill. One of these, after drinking and preening her feathers, walked over toward the barn, and when within about 20 feet flew to the roof and without hesitation entered the old nest box. It was No. 555414, who had arrived for her third consecutive nesting in this unusual site. The box was immediately cleaned out and soon contained a well-lined nest. Mr. Keller reports that on April 11 she was incubating a set of 10 eggs. A cold spell from April 7 to 10 threatened disaster for the eggs, as the temperature dropped to 16° above zero, with a heavy snowstorm. Feeling much concerned for the safety of the eggs, Mr. Keller examined the nest on April 11, and found



MALLARD DUCK No. 555414 ENTERING HER NEST BOX ON
THE ROOF OF A BARN

Photo by F. J. Keller, Antioch, Neb.

that the box inclosing the nest had afforded the protection needed, and that incubation was in progress.

In connection with this unusual series of return records, Mr. Keller has contributed an interesting bit of information concerning the manner in which the young reach the ground. To quote his report on this subject: "She coaxes them out of the box, quacking real low to them. . . . When she has them all on the roof she flies to the ground, the little ones tumbling down after her. It does not seem to hurt them [although] they fall about 7 feet. When she gets them down she stays on the ground under the nest quacking and listening for quite a while to make sure she has them all." It will be recalled that the female Wood Duck has been reported to carry her young, both in her bill and on her back, although the most recent recorded observation on the subject¹ indicates that the manner of descent described for these young Mallards also is employed by the strictly arboreal nesting wood ducks.

Mr. Keller, whose ranch is a game refuge, has been operat-

¹ Joseph Dixon. Nesting of the Wood Duck in California. *The Condor*, vol. 26, pp. 41-66, March, 1924.

ing a duck-banding station for several years, and many valuable data have been accumulated as a result of his activities. The author is indebted to him for the full details concerning No. 555414 and also for the photograph. Further news relative to this now-famous duck will be awaited with interest.

Biological Survey, Washington, D. C.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW PLUMAGES

By MARION T. BOGGS AND JOHN T. NICHOLS

FOREWORD

NOTES on banded White-throated Sparrows may add something to our knowledge of the plumage changes in that species. The plumages of White-throats handled may roughly be divided into dull, medium, and nuptial, and the records secured are arranged in tabular form under this classification (see following table of data gathered by Marion A. Boggs at Waynesville, North Carolina):

Number	Plumage dull	Medium	Nuptial
65619 (banded May 2, 1923)		Apr. 26, 1925 (head-stripes brownish ashy)	
117874	Oct. 22, 1923	May 4, 1926	
	Apr. 21, 1924	Dec. 3, 1925	
	Nov. 21, 1924	Nov. 23, 1926	
122403	Dec. 1, 1923	Jan. 11, 1926	Apr. 16, 1925
140790		Oct. 26, 1924	
		Apr. 14, 1925	
		Dec. 9, 1927	
		Mar. 29, 1928 (molting head and throat)	
		Apr. 13, 1928 (molt complete)	
148846	Nov. 6, 1924	Jan. 9, 1926	
	May 2, 1925	May 1, 1926	
148859		Nov. 29, 1924	Dec. 28, 1927
165964		Jan. 14, 1926	
		May 1, 1926 (bright medium, molting on throat)	
		Apr. 21, 1927	
186619		Nov. 13, 1926	Apr. 10, 1929
		Nov. 5, 1927	(full nuptial)
		Apr. 16, 1928 (molt complete, bright medium)	
186625		Nov. 20, 1926	
		Jan. 17, 1928	
		Apr. 2, 1929 (molting)	
		Apr. 22, 1929 (molt complete, bright medium)	
571216		Oct. 23, 1927	Jan. 8, 1929 (near nuptial)
			Apr. 18, 1929 (nuptial, median line dull)
571217		Oct. 24, 1927	
		Apr. 16, 1928 (no molt)	
		Nov. 24, 1928 (bright medium)	
		Apr. 11, 1929 (no sign of molt, bright medium)	