

pecker 48, Purple Finch 62, Goldfinch 123, Tree Sparrow 11, Chipping Sparrow 1, Junco 89, Song Sparrow 4, Fox Sparrow 2, Towhee 1, Black and White Warbler 1, Brown Creeper 6, White-breasted Nuthatch 16, Red-breasted Nuthatch 4, Chickadee 89, Golden-crowned Kinglet 1, and Bluebird 5. The relatively large number of Woodpeckers and Chickadees is probably accounted for by the wooded surroundings of the station, and the small number of Song Sparrows and Chipping Sparrows is doubtless because most of the banding was done during the winter months. The Towhee was a winter bird, which was at the station for a number of weeks and was banded February 3, 1924.

As Mrs. Emmons is interested only in the "gentle sport" of bird-banding (as Mrs. Whittle has called it) and not in the scientific aspects of the subject, she has made no study of plumage changes or other matters of the sort, nor has she made any special effort to retake birds already banded, so probably her records tell only a part of the story of what has been going on. Nevertheless there is a record of a Downy Woodpecker (No. 120705) which I banded on December 30, 1923, and which has been taken every year since then, the last time being April 28, 1929. There are also several records of Woodpeckers and Chickadees for four or five years. As there are many banded birds of these species at the station, I do not doubt that some systematic trapping might produce interesting results.

I noted that there were no Purple Finch returns, which seems surprising in view of experiences at other banding stations. There was, however, one recovery, a 1925 bird which was found dead in 1927 in another part of Dover. Mrs. Emmons said that the Purple Finches which were then (May, 1929) at the station (and presumably nesting) were not banded. Of the 89 Juncos there was only one return, a 1924 bird taken in 1929. Mrs. Emmons also said that practically all the Hairy Woodpeckers she had taken were unbanded, but I found that this was probably because the banded ones were trap-shy, rather than that they did not remain in the vicinity. They are, of course, wary birds, but they come more or less regularly to the suet at the station.—H. S. SHAW, Exeter, New Hampshire.

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**Bird-Banding Notes from Wells River.**—The storm of April 12, 1929 deposited ten inches of snow in the Connecticut Valley and several inches more a few miles away from the Valley at slightly higher altitudes. The ground remained snow covered until the 15th and the snow did not wholly disappear until the 19th. Minimum temperatures during the period ranged from 29 degrees to 38 degrees above, while maximum temperatures varied between 38 and 47 degrees above. The food problem for birds was acute and the traps and feeding-stands were well patronized and the food disappeared with surprising rapidity. During the period of April 12-20, we placed bands on 98 individuals of 8 species divided as follows: Horned Lark (*Otocoris a. alpestris*), 1; Redpoll (*Acanthis l. linaria*), 1; Vesper Sparrow (*Poocetes g. gramineus*), 2; Tree Sparrow (*Spizella m. monticola*), 2; Slate-colored Junco (*Junco h. hyemalis*), 70; Song Sparrow (*Melospiza m. melodia*), 9; Fox Sparrow (*Passerella i. iliaca*), 11; Robin (*Planesticus m. migratorius*), 2.

Among these were two individuals having diseased feet. Slate-colored Junco No. B94733, an adult male, had an enlarged metatarsus on right foot. The second, third, and fourth toes were bent back to the tarsus and then curved forward again, almost describing a full circle. Fox Sparrow No. 394371 also had an enlarged metatarsus with a twist to outer side. The middle toe was without the nail and the last phalanx was swollen. The hind toe was stiff. Neither bird had much use of the defective member. The sparrow scratched with one foot and stood on

one foot, only using the other to keep its balance when alighting. At other times the crippled foot was held straight out and usually pointing backward, although sometimes forward.

Unfortunately our supply of the small size bands became exhausted so that a number of Juncos had to be released unbanded. During the migration of the past season, ninety-one individuals of this species have been banded.

On April 14, 1929, we recovered Song Sparrow No. 63591 banded in June, 1923, at Marshfield, Mass., by Joseph A. Hagar.—WENDELL P. SMITH, Wells River, Vt., June 4, 1929.

**An Early Record for the Scarlet Tanager.**—On April 20, 1929, the Biological Survey received from George D. Eustis, of Vineyard Haven, Massachusetts, a specimen of the Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga erythromelas*) that had been found dead by his gardener on the morning of April 18th. The specimen, which was a female, had evidently been dead for several days, as it was so badly decomposed that it could not be preserved.

In "Items of Interest," No. 96, issued by the Division of Ornithology of the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture, on May 6, 1929, Dr. John B. May refers to the severe storm that occurred on the northern Atlantic coast at that time. It seems probable that this storm was responsible for this and other unusual occurrences this season on the Massachusetts coast. In the Washington, D. C., region, Scarlet Tanagers arrived about on time, the first seen being on April 27th. The earliest record for this area is April 17, 1896.—FREDERICK C. LINCOLN, *Biological Survey*, Washington, D. C.

**Cowbirds—Decoys—Incubation Period.**—The antagonism of our native birds to the Cowbird (*Molothrus ater ater*) may be utilized if the bander happens to capture one of this species, preferably the female bird. A female Cowbird placed in a sparrow-type trap resulted in the immediate capture of a male Cowbird and subsequently of a pair of Robins who were nesting nearby. The Biological Survey mentions that banded birds should be released immediately after banding. The case of the Cowbird, however, if banded, would seem to be a special one, as the nestlings of this species require no care from their own kind. In fact, if the female Cowbird is prevented from accomplishing her usual practice of laying her eggs in the nests of other birds, the result is that more of the other nestlings survive.

Many observers have reported that Cowbird eggs usually hatch before those of the parasitized species. A Cowbird captured by me for banding was found apparently to be eggbound, having an abnormally enlarged abdomen. To determine the true cause of this, the bird was placed under observation in a cage. The next morning two eggs were found. This occurrence suggests that, due to the power of retaining their eggs which the Cowbirds seem to have, part of the incubation period may be represented by the period of retention. The result would be as observed, a shorter incubation period for the Cowbird as compared with the birds it selects for raising its young.

From a study of the nesting of the Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia melodia*), which included one egg of the Cowbird, in May and June, 1928, the incubation period of the Cowbird appeared to be twelve days, while that of the Song Sparrow averaged thirteen days, two eggs remaining unhatched. The faster growth of the Cowbird nestling eventually made its weight five times that of the smallest Song Sparrow, and the nest space