

**Unusual Peterboro, New Hampshire, Purple Finch Returns.**—In the *Bulletin of the Northeastern Bird-Banding Association*, Vol. V, p. 38, I published a note on Purple Finch returning ratios at Mrs. Whittle's banding station in Peterboro, New Hampshire. To avoid space in summing up the matter in the note, the table it contained is reprinted below:

Year of Banding	Number Banded	Returns-1	Per cent	Returns-2	Per cent	Returns-3	Per cent
1923	166	24 (1924)	15.06	17 (1925)	68.00	10 (1926)	58.82
		Returns-4	Per cent	Returns-5	Per cent <sup>1</sup>		
		7 (1927)	70.00	2 (1928)	28.57		
1924	241	Returns-1	Per cent	Returns-2	Per cent	Returns-3	Per cent
		67 (1923)	27.80	32 (1926)	47.76	17 (1927)	53.12
		Returns-4	Per cent <sup>2</sup>				
		4 (1928)	23.59				

These quoted ratios are fairly parallel for the bandings of 1923 and 1924, except that the percentage of returns-2 of the 1924 birds is much lower than for the returns-2 of the 1923 birds. It should be stated that these ratios are based in each case on the total number of birds banded, no attempt being made to base ratios on sexes or the ages of the birds when banded. It will be noted in general that, the older the birds were, the higher was the percentage of returns based on the records of the previous years. These percentages have been called returning or survival ratios, and it is on similar ratios at his station that Magee has estimated the average life of the Purple Finch at approximately two years.

At my present banding station in Peterboro, which is situated three miles north of Mrs. Whittle's station, I banded 114 Purple Finches, adults of both sexes, immature birds at least one year old, and young-of-the-year, during 1929. An attempt follows to analyze the records of the returning Purple Finches in 1930 based on age and sex when banded as well as viewed as a whole. I was led to make this analysis because never before in my banding experience have I had such a large percentage of this species return the following year after banding. The analysis appears to show why, based on the following returning ratios, this happened. The total returns plus one recovery made three miles from my station (which is included because we are now considering the number of birds surviving) numbered 48, or 42.105 per cent. Compare this with corresponding returning ratios of 1923 and 1924 birds in the tabulation above. From information gained in 1930, I learn that the 48 returns were made up in 1929 of 21 males, 15 females, 9 undoubted juveniles, 2 probable juveniles, and 1 bird whose sex is unknown. It should be pointed out that 36 of the returns were banded during June and July, 1929, the period during which nesting activities were at their maximum, so they were all probably locally nesting birds.

Of the 21 returning males, 15 were at least two years old when banded, so that they comprised 31 + per cent of the total returns. The other 6 males, which were in immature plumage when banded, comprised 12.50 per cent of the total returns, and the 15 returning females comprised 31 + per cent. The returns of 9 juveniles comprised 18.75 per cent of the total of 48 returns, or, in all 93.25 per cent, the remaining 6 + per cent being of doubtful character.

<sup>1</sup> Continuation of line next above.

<sup>2</sup> Continuation of line next above.

Of the 36 birds-of-the-year (including two of doubtful age) banded in 1929, 11 returned in 1930, or 30.55 per cent, a very high returning ratio for birds of this age.

From the foregoing it appears probable that the unusual number of returns in 1930 (48 out of 114 birds banded) is due to three factors,—(1) to the large number of adult and immature birds banded in 1929; (2) to the surprising number of returning birds-of-the-year; and (3) to the fact that so many of the returns when banded were *nesting* birds. This latter aspect of the matter is particularly important in that nesting birds are more likely to return to their nesting area of the previous year than an equal number of birds visiting the station during their migrations, or as the result of the well-known habit of this species to wander about the country throughout much of the year. Not only so, but their resulting frequent visits to the traps increase the opportunities to record their presence many-fold. This was shown in 1930 by the fact that many of the birds repeated during June and July, as was also the case in 1929. It is a question in the light of this latter consideration if we should not modify our estimate of the average life of the Purple Finch by separately appraising the importance of returning ratios based on an exhaustive series of returning nesting birds.—CHARLES L. WHITTLE.

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**Common Tern Recovered in Guadeloupe.**—Another Common Tern from the colony at Tern Island, Chatham, Massachusetts, has been recaptured in the West Indies. The individual in question, A365745, was banded July 5, 1930, by Charles B. Floyd. It was captured by a fisherman at Pointe Noire, Guadeloupe, October 1, 1930.

This case has several points of interest, some of which are not lacking in humor. It was first reported to the Biological Survey by Professor Robert Poncy, of Geneva, Switzerland, who transmitted a clipping from the French paper "Le Chasseur Français" giving the details of the bird's capture. In translating the account, the word "épervier" was read correctly as "Sparrow Hawk," so it was assumed that the fisherman owned one of the European Sparrow Hawks (closely allied to the American Sharp-shinned Hawk) trained to pursue and capture birds, and it was so reported by the writer, at the annual meeting of the Northeastern Bird-Banding Association in Boston, on January 16, 1931. However, a second letter from Professor Poncy replying to the Bureau's advice to him of the details of banding, revealed an error in translation, for, while "épervier" does mean "Sparrow Hawk," it also is the name of a floating net in the shape of a cone that is cast from a boat. Accordingly, A365745, instead of being caught by a trained falcon, was ignominiously hauled into a boat after a chance cast of a fish-net probably made at a time when the tern had itself plunged into the water in pursuit of a fish.

Curiously enough, the notice in "Le Chasseur Français" contains an odd typographical error, as the fisherman, instead of being called "marin pêcheur," that is, a fishing seaman, or deep-sea fisherman, is called "marin pêcheur," or kingfisher.

The case of this banded tern also was reported to the Survey by Mr. Peter Skovgaard, of Viborg, Denmark, who had noticed the statement of capture in "Le Chasseur Français."—FREDERICK C. LYCOLN, Biological Survey, Washington, D. C.