

More About Mallard No. 555414.—Mallard number 555414 seems to lead a charmed life and she has been responsible for a substantial increase of her kind.

For the benefit of those who have not followed the history of this bird, originally banded November 29, 1927, at Antioch, Nebraska, by F. J. Keller, the following brief summary is given:¹ First return, March 12, 1928; second return, March 10, 1929. In each of the three seasons already reported upon, this bird selected as her nesting site a box placed on the roof of a barn on the game refuge of Mr. Keller.

In the autumn of 1929 she went south with her offspring and associates, again escaped unscathed through the shooting season, and was recaptured by Mr. Keller at the home station on March 11, 1930. She again nested in her box on the barn roof and on May 10th, nine of her thirteen eggs successfully hatched. On July 18, 1930, her second setting of eggs hatched, the family again numbering nine.

The almost clocklike precision with which this bird returned (March 12, 1928, March 10, 1929, and March 11, 1930) was broken in 1931, as it was not until April 9th that she was taken by Mr. Keller. However, by April 13th the nest on the barn roof held four eggs. Under date of September 22d, Mr. Keller advised the Biological Survey that she still had with her twelve young birds.

For five consecutive years this bird has successfully run the gantlet of shooters and returned to nest again in her unusual site. The record is remarkable as it stands, but it is hoped that this interesting bird may be spared for several years to come and that she will add still other returns to the series already at hand.—FREDERICK C. LINCOLN, Biological Survey, Washington, D. C.

A Third Red-winged Blackbird Return-S.—In *Bird-Banding*, Vol. II, p. 185, I recorded a second return-S Red-winged Blackbird² banded by William P. Wharton at Groton, Massachusetts. The first record of this sort was reported, as stated, by Laurence B. Fletcher at Cohasset, Massachusetts. A letter recently received from Mr. Wharton states that he has secured still another return-S of this species at Groton on May 28, 1931, a bird banded May 25, 1930. Records of this kind continue to indicate that there are few if any migrants which fail to return to nest at or near their former nesting place, and to a less extent the records to date appear also to indicate that the young return to their approximate place of birth, an example of which was first recorded by Audubon in the case of Pheebes.—C. L. WHITTLE.

A Return-2 Baltimore Oriole.—Using string and yarn in an open-top Chardonneret trap as bait, we banded an adult female Baltimore Oriole (*Icterus galbula*) No. 641732, on May 20, 1929. Using nesting material in 1930 and 1931, this bird was a return-1 May 16, 1930, and a return-2 May 22, 1931. The bird nested very near the same place for the three successive years, though the exact spot is not known. In the spring of 1930, using a shallow bath in a pull-string trap as bait, we banded six adult Orioles, four being females. During May and June, 1931, we caught six more adults of this species, using the same trap, and as before four were females.—A. MILLIKEN, Brooks School, North Andover, Massachusetts.

¹For full details up to and including 1929, see *Bul. Northeastern Bird-Banding Assoc.*, Vol. V, no. 3, pp. 92-94, July, 1929.

²This record was incorrectly credited to Summerville, South Carolina, instead of Groton, Massachusetts.

The Number of Eggs Laid by the Vesper Sparrow—In his interesting paper on "Some Notes on the Breeding of the Vesper Sparrow" in *Bird-Banding* for October, Mr. Lincoln Bryant, Jr., refers to the statement of authorities that the minimum laying of eggs for the Vesper Sparrow is four, the maximum six. This certainly does not agree with my experience with these birds.

I have examined at various times somewhere between fifty and a hundred nests of the Vesper Sparrow. Most of these were in Ontario County, New York, a few were in Bergen and Sussex Counties, New Jersey, in New Brunswick, Canada, and elsewhere. I have never yet seen an indication of the Vesper Sparrow laying over four eggs, and three, particularly as a second set for the season, are quite as common as four. I have noted a number of instances where there was nothing to indicate that the bird ever laid more than two eggs which she was incubating.—B. S. BOWDISH, Demarest, New Jersey.

An Interesting Great Horned Owl Capture.—While returning from tending a duck trap on the Walter P. Chrysler estate at Horn's Point on the Choptank River, Maryland, just after dark on the evening of October 7, 1931, I flushed a Great Horned Owl, which fluttered up in front of my car and flew laboriously down the road. The headlights showed it to be carrying something heavy, something which it could not lift two feet off the ground. I gave chase, and the bird dropped clumsily a hundred yards farther on, to crouch defensively atop the prey it seemed so loath to leave. I stopped the car twenty feet away and turned on my strong spotlight. The owl's attention was riveted by the dazzling beam, and while it stood motionless staring into the glare, I crept up cautiously on the dark side, threw my jacket over it, and pinioned it down. After wrapping the claws in my handkerchief to prevent accidents, and folding the bird safely in my jacket, I stooped to pick up its prey, which, to my surprise (and delight) proved to be a half-grown house cat! The kill evidently had just been made, for the limp body was still warm and quivering.

The owl weighed forty ounces, and from its small size I judged it to be a male. The cat weighed nineteen ounces, almost half as much as its captor.

I banded the bird and released it next morning on the shore of Cambridge Harbor. It flew out over the water and alighted on one of the launches at anchor nearby. Immediately the Laughing Gulls gathered from near and far, and in a few moments eighty of them screamed, cackled, and chattered in a white cloud above the ruffled owl. They harried it, crow fashion, for five minutes, until the subject of their wrath flapped lazily to the opposite shore and disappeared in the shelter of the trees.—O. L. AUSTIN, JR., Bureau of Biological Survey, Cambridge, Maryland.

Two Common Tern Returns and a Roseate Tern Recovery.—During 1930 we banded 763 Common Terns on Greater Weepectet Island, lying near Naushon Island in Buzzard's Bay. The adult Terns we banded nested in two areas, a stretch of open shore and a higher inland area covered with bushes. In 1931 two returns were recaptured which were nesting on the same areas they had nested in during 1930. The dates are: A347420, banded on nest July 1, 1930, a return taken on its nest June 15, 1931; and A347494, banded on nest July 10, 1930, a return taken on nest June 15, 1931.