

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.