

**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 Weepeeket 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.

A Roseate Tern A343200 (immature), banded July 4, 1929, was shot at Lamaline, on the southern coast of Newfoundland, July 28, 1931.—MRS. ETHEL M. CROWELL, 4 Maple Street, Franklin, Massachusetts.

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**Additional History of White-breasted Nuthatch No. 56530.—**

In the *Bulletin*, Vol. IV, 1928, pages 29 and 100, and in *Bird-Banding*, Vol. I, 1930, page 83, was recorded the then known history of a male White-breasted Nuthatch, No. 56530, banded May 14, 1923, by Mrs. R. G. Caughey of Antrim, New Hampshire, which in 1930 was at least seven and a half years old. Mrs. Caughey now reports that this bird continued to visit her station up to October, 1931, so he is now at least eight and a half years old.—C. L. WHITTLE.

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**Duration of Life of the Roseate Tern.<sup>1</sup>—**On July 7, 1931, a Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougalli*) bearing band number 403063 was found dead on Egg Island in Lewis Bay near Hyannis, Cape Cod, Massachusetts, by a member of the staff of the Austin Ornithological Research Station. This bird had been banded when a chick by Mr. Charles B. Floyd at Tern Island, Chatham, Cape Cod, Massachusetts, July 8, 1926. So far as it has been possible to ascertain, this age record of five years constitutes the longest duration of life proved for an individual of this species.—OLIVER L. AUSTIN, M.D.

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**Song Sparrow Returns-3.—**Song Sparrow No. 174410 (band changed in 1931 to No. B119586), banded on December 7, 1926, a return-1 on August 16, 1929, a return-2 on October 20, 1930, a return-3 on March 16, 1931.

Song Sparrow No. 578824, banded December 11, 1927, a return-1 on October 10, 1928, a return-2 on June 3, 1929, and a return-3 on March 5, 1931.

Song Sparrow No. 174448 (band changed in 1931 to No. B119584), banded on October 13, 1927, returned on March 19, 1929, a return-2 on March 4, 1930, and a return-3 on March 12, 1931.

Song Sparrow No. 611688, banded on March 31, 1928, returned on April 2, 1929, a return-2 on March 2, 1930, and a return-3 on May 1, 1931. Song Sparrow No. 611696, banded on May 2, 1928, returned on March 3, 1929, a return-2 on May 15, 1930, and a return-3 on March 7, 1931.

Note the different periods of the year in which No. 174410 and No. 578824 were captured, and that though one was banded a year later than the other, the periods of capture are similar with one exception.

The last three have now been breeding here for four consecutive years. No. 174448 remained during the winter following its first capture and also the spring and summer of 1928.—RAYMOND J. MIDDLETON, Norristown, Pa.

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**Starling, Barn Swallow, and White-throated Sparrow Recoveries.**

—Starling No. A200521, an adult banded on November 20, 1928, was killed in Palatka, Florida, by Mr. A. Crabtree in December, 1930. This

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<sup>1</sup>Contribution No. 5 from the Austin Ornithological Research Station.