

captured one with a partly grown chick in its stomach. The terns are present in thousands, and to count their numbers with any degree of accuracy is an impossibility, but we estimate that between ten and fifteen thousand make this island their breeding ground.

Cotton-tail rabbits were released on the island by the Division of Fisheries and Game, and they have multiplied greatly as they have no enemies but a passing hawk or Snowy Owl. In Warden Turner's opinion they are not molested by the snakes. Each fall many are trapped and shipped to parts of the State where the covers are depleted of this popular little game animal.

The terns have undoubtedly inhabited the island for many years, and their nests are everywhere in the long grass. One can stand on an elevated point overlooking the rolling uplands and observe adult birds in every direction, in the air or on the ground covering eggs or young. The location of these nests in the long grass is quite in contrast to the breeding areas selected by the terns in the other large rookeries on Tern Island, Chatham, Egg Island, Hyannis, and Muskeget Island, where nearly open sand is chosen in preference to grassy sections. Here and there are brown patches formed by dead grass which is killed by the terns and closely matted to the earth. A slight depression in this soft material makes an ideal nest. To the bird-banders there is no more delightful picture than the beautifully colored nesting birds against the background of green in as naturally secure a locality as can be found in the State.

On July 2d, 3d, and 4th, 1932, there were eggs in great numbers and few had hatched. During those three days only 490 young could be found and these were banded, but the possibility at this time of banding several thousand later in the season seemed excellent.

Ten days after the writer visited this colony four other members of the Northeastern Bird-Banding Association, who have worked there in other years, arrived to continue the banding and were astonished to find that of the thousands of adult terns not over five hundred were present, an unprecedentedly small number at the height of the breeding season. There were very few eggs, and these were scattered about, some broken and many more out of the nests. Only four live chicks were found and almost no dead ones: of the 490 banded by the writer and his party, only one was noted, and that was dead.

Two questions at once arise: why did the birds desert eggs and young, and to what place did they go? Warden Turner noticed no diminution in numbers for ten days after our departure. When the adults disappeared, many of the eggs and young would, of course, be easy prey for the snakes. The only explanation that the writer can offer for the departure of the adults is the disappearance of their food-supply, for if the schools of small fish upon which the terns prey leave the immediate vicinity of the island, the old birds would be forced to leave and thus to desert eggs and young. Reports are current along the Massachusetts coast that the eel-grass which is generally abundant in every favorable spot has entirely vanished. Can there be any connection between the disappearance of the eel-grass and the small fish, thereby explaining the desertion of Penikese Island by the terns?—CHARLES B. FLOYD.

Early Bird-Banding in Europe.—After reading in the April, 1932, issue of *Bird-Banding* the interesting account of "An Early Successful Bird-Banding Venture in England," I wondered whether any notice had

been taken in modern literature of an even earlier record than that mentioned in Mr. Fogg's article. There is in my possession a copy of "*British Zoölogy*. / Vol. II. / Class II. Division II. / Water-Fowl. / with an / appendix. / Warrington / Printed by William Eyres, / for / Benjamin White, at Horace's Head, Fleet Street, London. / MDCCLXXVI." This is part of Pennant's *British Zoölogy*. On page 356 in speaking of the Common Heron, the author says: "It is said to be very long lived; by Mr. Keysler's account, it may exceed sixty years¹; and by a recent instance of one that was taken in Holland by a hawk belonging to the Stadtholder, its longevity is again confirmed, the bird having a silver plate fastened to one leg, with an inscription, importing it had been before struck by the elector of Cologne's hawks in 1735."

Not being able to find a copy of Keysler's *Travels in the Milwaukee Library* in order to investigate this citation, I asked Mr. Charles L. Whittle to consult the work, which he could probably find in some library in New England. This he succeeded in doing, and the following reference from the work in question gives the details of the heron-banding cited by Pennant, as sent me by Mr. Whittle: "In this palace² the court often diverts itself with hunting the heron, and every year, at the conclusion of it, a heron, whose good fortune it has been to be taken alive, is, for memorial, set at liberty with a silver ring on its foot, on which the name of the reigning elector is engraven. No longer ago than last spring, one of these birds was taken a second time, having on its ring the name of duke Ferdinand, grandfather to the present elector, so that it has survived its former adventure above sixty years: they put a ring with the present elector's name upon its leg, and gave it its liberty again." From Vol. I, p. 87, "*Travels through Germany, Bohemia, Hungary, Switzerland, Italy and Lorrain by John George Keysler*. Translated from the Second Edition of the German, and published in London in 1760 by G. Keith in Gracechurch Street, as the third edition."

Calculating from the date of the earlier of these two references, one can be definitely assured that the banding of herons was a well established procedure at least as early as 1669. There is no doubt that it was done much earlier than this. The common heron is *Ardea cinerea cinerea*.—C. S. JUNG, 2502 East Stratford Court, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Nine More Snow Bunting Returns-W.—In *Bird-Banding*, Vol. I, October, 1930, pages 187 and 188, I gave my list of returns of Snow Buntings (*Plectrophenax nivalis nivalis*) for the winter of 1929-30, and in Vol. II, July, 1931, page 127, I published all my returns and recoveries of this species as of that date. Since that time two more recoveries were reported by me in *Bird-Banding*, Vol. III, April, 1932, pages 68 and 69. During the winter of 1931-32, I had nine more returns of this species at my station. These are tabulated below, together with three returns-2 previously reported as returns-1.

¹Keysler's *Travels*, vol. I, p. 70.

²The palace above referred to is that of Starnberg, three leagues from Munich, belonging to the Elector of Bavaria. The above account was published as "Letter IX," dated Munich, June 21, 1729. Keysler was a Fellow of the Royal Society in London.