

## GENERAL NOTES

**A Plea for Coöperative Ornithology.**—During the past three years I have banded 257 fledgling Tree Swallows (*Iridoprocne bicolor*) at Princeton, Massachusetts. Of this number, 148 were banded in 1934 and hence cannot be taken as returns until 1935. Of the 109 banded in 1932 and 1933 only 6, or 5.5 per cent, have been taken as returns at the original colony or in the town of Princeton.

If bird-banders in New England and especially in Massachusetts would make an effort to trap adult Tree Swallows, some valuable information might be obtained on the dispersal of these Princeton fledglings.

Tree Swallows would make an excellent species on which bird-banders might concentrate, to obtain information on the dispersal of fledglings, because of the ease with which both the male and female can be trapped in a nest-box.—L. B. CHAPMAN, Newton Highlands, Massachusetts.

**A New Method of Banding Sea Ducks.**—During my studies of the birds in the St. Mary Islands Sanctuary on the North Shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, in the summer of 1934, eighteen American Eider ducklings (*Somateria mollissima dresseri*) were banded. These youngsters were picked up on the nesting islands and banded when a few hours old. The banding was done by placing a small No. 2 band around the hind toe, passing it through the lobe of that toe. A small slit was made in the lobe with a pen-knife through which the band could be easily passed. The operation appeared to be painless. Bleeding, when it occurred, was almost imperceptible. The No. 2 band was found to be large enough to accommodate the toe of the adult and not appreciably to hinder the movements of the baby duck in the water.

I believe that this method of banding the downy young of birds with lobed toes is new and that it is worthy of further experimentation. Certainly it is almost impossible to secure any appreciable number of adult Eiders for banding without interfering seriously with their nesting activities. It is only for a short time during the nesting-season that they are found in any concentration which would offer opportunity for trapping. As yet, I believe, less than a dozen adult birds have been banded, owing to the difficulty of securing them without disturbing the nest. Of course the newly hatched ducklings cannot be banded by placing the large bands used on adults on the small tarsi, and after they leave the island where they hatch (usually the first or the second day) it has been found impossible to capture them again.

It seems possible that ultimately another advantage may come through banding newly hatched young. If we can sometime determine the ratio of returns from the adults banded and use this in computing the status of the species, it might be possible to compute the ratio of returns from the newly hatched young which were banded and thus secure data which would be of considerable importance. In the case of the American Eider in the region which I have visited, the Great Black-backed Gull is a very serious enemy. What percentage of the great loss of young ducks should be charged to this predator is a disputable matter. If control methods are instituted on the Gull in behalf of the Eider any marked increase in the crop of ducks produced could be measured, to some extent, through extensive banding of ducklings.—R. A. JOHNSON, State Normal School, Oneonta, New York.

**A Singing Female Song Sparrow.**—During the spring of 1934 I had at my home in Worcester, Massachusetts, a singing female Song Sparrow, C189638.

When the bird first arrived early in April, it sang a great deal, and I followed it about for several days, for it was hard to believe that a Song Sparrow could be the author of that peculiar song.

I captured and banded the bird on April 10th, placing a black band on the left leg. Wing and tail measurements of 63.50 and 65.25 mm., respectively, and weight of 20.40 grams indicated that this bird was a female. I later checked up and found that the peculiar song and black band belonged to the same bird. The only other