

and, although the nests were broken up by the brown females and the first mates stayed about for a few days afterward, these males mated to the brown birds and settled close to the former nests. Two brown females laid their first eggs on the bare floor of boxes, with just a nest-edging of hay.—LEWIS O. SHELLEY, East Westmoreland, New Hampshire.

**Returning Chickadee Mates.**—The warm weather has delayed the return of Chickadees this fall, but one pair, which reappeared at my station on October 26th, is of special interest. This pair, F23149 (male, banded January 17, 1932), and F31792 (female, banded October 24, 1932), part of whose history was given in a note in *Bird-Banding*, January, 1934, mated in the spring of 1933, having previously been together through the winter. That year their nest was not found, but as they were together on a feeding-shelf on May 10th, when the female begged, with fluttering wings, to be fed, and lunched there again in each other's company on July 9th, there was no doubt that they were a mated pair. Throughout last winter they were much together and this spring remated, raising two broods in the same hole in a birch stump, about three hundred and fifty yards south of my station.

Including their return together on October 26th, the male has been seen on nine of his visits for peanuts, on seven of which, and possibly also on the other two, he was accompanied by his mate.

The tendency of mates to keep together at other than the nesting-season was also noticed last fall. This might be supposed to result from traveling in the same flock, but the above pair is at present alone, except for one new Chickadee that attached itself to them early in the fall.

A second (probable) pair, L18935 (banded October 24, 1933) and H71312 (banded December 9, 1932), are also returns this fall. H71312 has been with its mate on eleven and possibly twelve visits out of fourteen, but L18935 has made seven visits alone (at least the other of the pair was not seen) or with other Chickadees, several of which are now flocking with these two.—DOROTHY A. BALDWIN, Hardwick, Massachusetts.

**A Twelve-Year-Old Blue Jay Recaptured.**—On the 17th of November, 1933, a Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta c. cristata*) bearing band number 9612, was taken in a flat trap. This bird had been banded on January 2, 1922, by Mr. Aldred S. Warthin, Jr., at a station located about three hundred yards from the site of recapture. While the numbers were entirely legible, the band had worn thin and was therefore replaced by C333993. The bird has not been retaken since.

This indicates that Blue Jay 9612 was at least twelve and a half years old when it was retaken, more than two years older than the Wren-tit recently reported by E. L. Sumner, Sr., (*Condor*, 36, 1934, p. 170) as the oldest recorded wild passerine bird.—THOMAS H. WELLER, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

**An Age Record of the Common Tern.**—The following recovery is of interest because of the length of life of a Common Tern (*Sterna h. hirundo*) that carried band number 674003 from July 1, 1928, until it was reported killed on September 7, 1934.

The bird was banded as a juvenile on Tern Island, Chatham, Massachusetts, and was killed on the west coast of Puerto Rico at Cabo Rajo.—CHARLES B. FLOYD, Auburndale, Massachusetts.

**A Downy Woodpecker with a Broken Bill.**—The inbreeding male Northern Downy Woodpecker (*Dryobates pubescens medianus*) banded A260655,<sup>1</sup> a permanent resident bird at our yard, coming to the food daily or nearly so over a

<sup>1</sup> See *Bird-Banding*, Vol. III, pp. 69, 70, 1932.

period of several years, becoming four years old the summer of 1934, suffered an accident that will make him hereafter a positive sight repeat. About mid-July he was first noticed acting strangely when feeding on doughnut at the piazza post. It was then seen that he had very recently suffered an accident to the upper mandible, which from the base stuck up at an abrupt angle and was thus bent back from the lower bill. He had at that time adapted himself to meet this odd deformity.

The changes in the bill until it was healed and as perfect as it ever would be again, were watched; these covered a period of some ten weeks. At first the damaged mandible was of normal length, but gradually it became worn down and off until once more flat with the lower, while only a little more than half its length, and only the central bridge of the bill was left and that much shortened and narrowed. It resembles somewhat the bill of a Black Skimmer (*Rynchops nigra*).

For weeks he could feed on nothing but fresh doughnut, supplied each morning. He would cling to this with his breast feathers pressed against the food, neck hunched down until his bill in use worked in conjunction with the breast feathers, which made a shelf, or pocket, to catch crumbs. Most of the food was taken by pecking upward and catching it as loosened, letting it, literally, roll down his throat; he sometimes scooped up crumbs caught on his breast, doing this with a quick upward flirt of the head. The upper bill at all times was useless, and, as is shown by its constant wearing away, was often a handicap and in the way; this wearing down probably happened when he gleaned natural food in the woods, as he must have done to some extent. Boring is greatly impaired if not forever impossible. When he could manage the suet after some eight weeks, pecking it off in pieces with an upward lift of the lower bill, he discarded the doughnut as food.

Perhaps because of the bill handicap and subsequent lack of stamina from lack of necessary food elements, moult was retarded. Moult did not begin to show until the other Downies, including his four-year mate and one of his eldest daughters, had completed their moult; even after the young-of-the-year had acquired their bright, clean new plumage. During the moult he was seen to thrust his lower bill among his body feathers and, without pecking but slowly scratching the bill along, endeavor to rid his body of loose feathers and feather-sheath scales. It was a long, slow process, yet his new plumage had a sleekness comparable to that of normal birds.

He is the only Downy I have seen to alight to drink beside the brook. Alighting on a convenient perch close to the surface, bending over and suddenly ducking his bill into the water and then raising it abruptly, he drinks very much as he feeds.—LEWIS O. SHELLEY, East Westmoreland, N. H.