

not take a great deal of imagination to surmise from these figures that younger birds are crowded out by older in March and April but return again in May.

A bird of the year trapped and banded in June was retaken in December, April, and May.

(4) Very likely, resident birds, having returned, mix little with the late fall flocks.

On December 14, 1930, seven birds from such a flock entered the trap at one time, and were banded. None of these was ever retaken; whereas three out of eleven scattered birds trapped in November and December of that year were also taken at other times, as were six out of twelve taken in those months in 1931.

(5) It is possible that at times many previously resident birds emigrate permanently.

In April, 1931, 67 per cent (by observation) of the Starlings noticed carried bands; in April, 1932, 77 per cent; in April, 1933, 95 per cent; in April, 1934, only 16 per cent. The winter of 1933-34 was of unprecedented severity, and presumably a factor in this change; but no dead banded birds were reported that winter, though there was one such in late April, 1934.—JOHN T. NICHOLS. American Museum of National History, New York.

**Behavior of Young Herring Gulls.**—Although my summers, or a portion thereof, have been spent for many years on an island several miles off the Massachusetts coast I have never until the present year had an opportunity to study the Herring Gull, so common along the Atlantic coast, at close range. In recent years, however, the islands adjacent to my summer home at Baker's Island have been the breeding ground of a steadily increasing bird population, being literally covered with nests of Herring Gulls, (*Larus argentatus smithsonianus*).

Out of curiosity, I visited the North and South Gooseberry Islands, distant about one-half mile from Baker's Island, on June 13, 1936, and found them both alive with young gulls, both hatched and hatching, while in some of the nests the usual three eggs were still intact. Curious to see how this species would thrive in captivity, I took two young birds out of a nest, which, with another of somewhat larger size from another nest, I carried back with me to Baker's. At first I was somewhat in doubt as to whether or not they would take food, except as fed by the parent birds, but I soon discovered that they would eat from the hand or from a dish. After a few days of confinement I allowed them the freedom of the place. At night they took shelter in a box provided for them, but as they grew older they sought shelter under the bushes or under the house.

Contrary to the general belief that gulls are natural scavengers and will eat anything, we found that our birds developed distinct likes and dislikes in the matter of food, raw meat and raw fish being the favorite dishes, with baked beans running a close third.

In a recent paper, now unfortunately not at hand, it was stated that parent gulls are able to locate their young after the latter are five days old wherever they may be,<sup>1</sup> and this assertion was apparently substantiated when about three weeks after adopting the young birds three old birds appeared one morning, apparently the parents, and those visits were continued, several times daily, for a period of some three or four weeks, though the old birds made no attempt to feed the young. The old birds would fly over the cottage and around the nearby pond, calling noisily for some time before finally departing. This seeming attempt to entice the young birds away from their human associates persisted even after the young birds made us a visit after they had rejoined the colony at the South Gooseberry Island. The parents would accompany them and seemed to be endeavoring to prevent their lighting at our cottage. They would even peck at the young after they had alighted, and by that means try to start them

<sup>1</sup> I have been awaiting a copy of above reference (article on Herring Gulls), but as it has failed to arrive, I am unable to furnish the title.

flying away. On at least two occasions the young retaliated after alighting on our roof, and finally succeeded in driving the old birds away.

At the age of about four or five weeks they became more active, following Mrs. Very about the place, and on several occasions across the adjacent field, a distance of some four or five hundred yards. One of the young manifested a pronounced tendency to associate with humans in preference to its kind. It had a habit of coming to our piazza where the family was gathered and appeared to enjoy pulling at the ladies' skirts, even pulling out shoe-lacings and running off with a ball of yarn. It could recognize Mrs. Very's voice and would come into the cottage if a door was inadvertently left ajar. One afternoon when Mrs. Very had gone down to the store, it heard her talking to the storekeeper and it flew across the intervening pond, lit at their feet, and followed her on foot all the way back to the cottage, a distance of at least five hundred yards.

During the last few weeks of the season we saw less and less of the birds, until finally only one came to visit us, coming sometimes two or three times a day and then perhaps not appearing for several days. One afternoon in late August, when I had not seen this bird for several days, I noticed a young gull flying quite near the boat-wharf where I was, and, thinking that it might be our pet, I began calling it by a name which we had given it. Much to my surprise it recognized me, and after circling around a few times it settled down on the end of the pier and allowed me to pick it up. I had previously taught the bird to stand on my hand and it stood for some little time on my shoulder and hand, finally leaving to join the other gulls out on the water. I later discovered that on the previous day (August 28, 1936) it had lighted on the beach at Brace Cove, East Gloucester, and approached some bathers there, one of whom picked the bird up and noted the number of its band. The incident was reported to the United States Biological Survey by Mr. Robert S. Brookings, of 722 Jackson Place, Washington, D. C., who summers at East Gloucester. On another occasion it lighted near a cottage adjoining ours at Baker's Island and sat on Mrs. Very's arm while she walked with it to our own house.

On the day we were closing our house for the season it had not visited us for eleven days, but at about eleven o'clock it suddenly appeared, remaining with us until well along in the afternoon, far longer than at any previous time. Apparently deeply interested in the work of putting on the shutters and securing the windows, it sat on the piazza roof and watched me bring up shutters and fasten them on, never leaving the roof until I came down for lunch, when it flew down and ate some food which was brought to it.—NATHANIEL T. VERY, 1 Hamilton Street, Salem, Massachusetts.

**Trap Behavior of Purple Grackles.**—In checking over my banding records of Purple Grackles, (*Quiscalus q. quiscula*), banded at Huntington, Long Island, New York, I find a striking similarity in the repeat records to those banded by Horace McCann at Paoli, Pennsylvania. (See *Bird-Banding* for October, 1931, p. 174.)

In this paper Mr. McCann gives the repeat records of 305 grackles. Of this number, banded over a period of four years, only five repeated once. "Day-after-banding" repeats are conspicuous. A sixth bird developed the "trap habit," repeating nineteen times in ten days and entering his traps six times in one day.

Of the 312 grackles banded at my own station in a period of six years, only two birds repeated once, one repeating the day after banding and one twenty-three days later. A third bird developed the "trap habit" and repeated forty-one times in twelve days. On one day this bird was taken out of our traps eight times.

From the above comparison it would appear that with this usual trap-shy species the "trap habit" characteristic appears in one out of about three hundred of these birds.

Mr. McCann in the issue of *Bird-Banding* of July, 1931 (page 130), writes that he has banded only one partial albino grackle among the 305 trapped.