

GENERAL NOTES

Banded Terns, Black Skimmers and Gulls observed at Fort Pierce, Florida, during January, 1938.—The writer had occasion to spend the month of January at Fort Pierce on the east coast of Florida. Interest in the recently inaugurated Gull Survey led to a canvass of the gulls in the vicinity of town. Such a census naturally involved the locating of the diurnal roost by checking the movements of both terns and gulls which fed in and about the water of the Indian River.

About a mile north of the city the roosting area was found. It consisted of a large sand fill some five acres in extent, which had been pumped in the previous year, and was now hard and dry, with no vegetation whatsoever. A miniature fresh water pond on the south side proved very attractive to the gulls and terns, both for bathing and drinking.

Twelve visits were made to the roost in the early afternoon when the birds were least disturbed. Close approach to the birds was possible with the use of a car, and in this manner the concentration was sometimes closely checked for several hours. The brooding posture of the gulls, and terns made band checking somewhat tedious; but generally some slight movement of the hand or car would bring the birds to their feet, and thus make a count possible.

During this period the number of species was fairly constant, but the number of individuals gradually increased until the peak was reached about the third week of January. This applied more to the gulls than to the terns. While only one herring gull marked with the Gull Survey bands was found in late January, the relatively large number of banded individuals of other species are, I believe, worthy of note.

Following is a brief annotated list of the species frequenting the roost with special reference to the number of banded individuals observed. Bonapartes Gull is not included, as no banded birds were found despite a thorough checking. A flock of fifteen Cabots terns visited the roost on January 13; but a close scrutiny was impossible due to their restlessness.

Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus smithsonianus*).—Only one individual noted, a first-year bird with the Gull Survey bands of the St. Mary's Island, Que. group banded by Harrison F. Lewis. This bird was observed on January 24, when the usual number of twenty first-year birds increased to thirty-eight. On the same date two full adult herring gulls were found (only one previously about) and a first-year great black backed gull, perhaps indicating a general movement of gulls. The banded individual was not seen again. And the number of first-year herring gulls also decreased thereafter.

Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*).—Banded individuals as follows: 1, a first-year bird, January 10; 2 first-year birds, January 12; 1 first-year bird, January 13 and 21; and finally 3 first-year birds, and 1 full adult, January 22. On the latter date 65 ring bills were present. All bands were on the right legs.

Royal Tern (*Thalasseus maximus*).—A bird of the ocean beach, rather than the Indian River, occurred at the roost seldom when its restlessness made it poor material for checking. 1 banded adult, and 1, immature in a flock of 15, January 11.

Caspian Tern (*Hydroprogne caspia imperator*).—Banded individuals as follows: 3, January 8; 1, January 10, 11, and 13; 5 out of a flock of 17, January 15; 9 out of a flock of 39, January 20; and finally 13 out of a flock of 53, January 21. The thirteen were made up of 2 immature with right leg bands, 9 adults with right leg bands, and 2 adults with left leg bands.

Black Skimmer (*Rhynchops n. nigra*).—Although this species was present on all visits to the roost only two banded individuals were noted. 1 adult with left leg band, and 1 immature with a right leg band out of a flock of 200 birds, January 11. The skimmers reached their maximum abundance on January 11 and fell off markedly thereafter until only 50 were left in late January.

Before concluding this note, I would like to add a word about an individual herring gull, a first-year bird, which was discovered on January 8. It was banded but not with the ordinary survey bands. It had a green band on each of its legs.

The bands seemed wrapped rather tightly around the legs, and were only half the width of a government band. Judging from the rolled appearance, the material was probably an elastic substance. These readily identified the bird in the field, and it was present from January 8 to 29, and again seen in the same area March 24.

These records, while not at all conclusive, may help to show what results could be obtained through the further use of colored bands in marking birds.—RICHARD G. KUERZI, Kent, Connecticut.

A Brown Thrasher Return-5.—Supplementing my note in *Bird-Banding* on Brown Thrasher returns at my station in Amherst, Massachusetts, in 1937, No. A-298946, an immature bird when banded, was a return-5 on May 26, 1938. The bird repeated June 15th, 16th, 17th and 22d so it was doubtless nesting nearby.—MRS. FREDERICK MORSE CUTLER.

Eastern Purple Finches as Bud-Eaters.—For the past three years, during the period from November to May, I have had a considerable number of Purple Finches (*Carpodacus p. purpureus*) come to my place at Ardmore, Pennsylvania. They usually come to a seckel-pear tree about ten feet from the house, and on one of the lower branches of this tree I have a small feeder in which I keep sunflower seeds, and underneath the tree I have a pull-string ground trap, in which I capture birds for banding. This year to date, I have captured and banded over a hundred Purple Finches.

The finches, while waiting for an opportunity to get at the feeder when another bird is feeding, will very often, during the months between March and May, eat the buds and blossoms of the seckel pear, and they appear to be destroying a large amount of the fruit on the tree. However, while this race of birds has been and still is being accused of doing great damage to fruit trees in different parts of the country, yet, my own experience would indicate that the accusation against these birds is unwarranted.

I have found, during the past three years, that the pruning the birds give the tree is decidedly beneficial. In the fall of each year when the birds were present in the spring, I have noted a very marked improvement in the amount of fruit on the tree, and last year, we not only had the largest number of pears on this tree we ever had before, but a great many of the pears were double the size of the normal seckel pear, and the flavor seemed to be decidedly improved. Let us be fair to the Purple Finch.—HORACE GROSKIN, 220 St. Georges Road, Ardmore, Pennsylvania.

Estimated Sex Ratio of the Eastern Purple Finch (*Carpodacus p. purpureus*), Based Exclusively on Returns at Sault Sainte Marie, Michigan.

—M. J. MAGEE, Sault Ste Marie, Michigan.

Year	Males	Females	Totals
1928	87	66	153
1929	83	66	149
1930	86	52	138
1931	81	62	143
1932	119	92	211
1933	86	84	170
1934	64	36	100
1935	66	57	123
1936	63	35	98
1937	51	44	95
Total returns by years	786	594	1380
57 per cent males, 43 per cent females.			

Some Bronzed Grackle and Blue Jay Age Records.—While studying a recent lot of returns of birds banded here at my home in Cincinnati, Ohio, I noted a number of records which might interest those who are especially concerned with the longevity of certain species of birds. The records are as follows:

Northern Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta c. cristata*) adult—A392716, banded April 24, 1932; returned May 1, 1935 and May 24, 1938.