

GENERAL NOTES

Eleven-year-old Grackle.—Bronzed Grackle (*Quiscalus versicolor*) 42-307569, banded at Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, Northampton, Hampshire County, Massachusetts, on July 17, 1945, as an adult male, was "found" in Hazlet, New Jersey in March, 1955.

The date of banding would indicate nearby nesting by this Grackle. An age of eleven years at least is indicated by this recovery record. The bird was never caught subsequent to banding at the station.—Edwin A. Mason, Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, Northampton, Massachusetts.

Wing Length in the Black-capped Chickadee.—Previous study of the wing length in the Eastern Purple Finch (*Bird-Banding*, 25: 97-101) led me to tabulate my wing lengths for *Parus a. atricapillus* at Lincoln, Mass., in the three categories shown below:

Known immatures	63.5 ± 1.9 mm.; 32 birds
Known adults	65.3 ± 2.0 mm.; 21 birds
Age unknown	63.9 ± 1.9 mm.; 49 birds

This suggests that adults have wings nearly two millimeters longer than do immatures. Probably most of this increase occurs at the first postnuptial molt. Whether this holds for both sexes I do not know.

If we give known immatures a weight of 80 and known adults a weight of 20, we find a weighted average of 63.9. The precise agreement with birds of unknown age is surely the long arm of coincidence, but that the average for unknown aged birds should be close to that of the immature is equally surely no coincidence. Any series of passerines of unknown age almost certainly contains about 80 percent of birds less than one year old.

I venture to cite this as one more reason for not deducing the dimensions of a population from a very small sample. The smaller the sample the less likely is its age composition to be that of the population as a whole. Further, many wing measurements in the literature which are alleged to be of adults are actually nearly those of first winter birds.—Charles H. Blake, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass.

High Tree Sparrow Wintering Site Tenacity. — During the winter of 1954-55 a high wintering ground site tenacity was evidenced for Tree Sparrows (*Spizella arborea*) by the return of 32 (31.7%) of 103 individuals banded during the previous winter. Middleton (*Bird-Banding*, 23: 22-28; 1952) reported the return of one out of five tree sparrows while trapping in snowy winters prior to 1945, while Mason (*Bird-Banding*, 23: 28; 1952) reported a 21% return from 43 birds in Massachusetts. The following table lists records from a permanent banding station on a wildlife management area in St. Charles County, Missouri.

	1953-54	1954-55	
Total individuals banded	103	344	
New Bandings	103	312	
New Banding Repeats	39	84	
Percent New Banding Repeats		37.9	26.8
Returns			32
Percent of Returns			31.7
Repeating in Year of Return			20
Percent Repeating in Year of Return			62.5

The higher percentage of returning tree sparrows, compared to new birds which repeated during the winter of return, points to either a very specific wintering site tenacity or an acquired feeding ground habit. Repeats also showed the returning birds to be present throughout the winter period (Nov. 10-March 30).

During both winters five government sparrow traps were used while three Japanese mist nets were set on random days throughout the second winter. This differential trapping method, use of both wire traps and mist nets, partly nullified the trap shyness problem and contributed to success in retrapping the returns. (14 individual returns were taken only with nets.) Secondly, a growth of Lambs' Quarters (*Chenopodium album*) in a neglected one-quarter acre garden acted as a natural baited area, concentrating up to 300 tree sparrows at one time. This

rank growth about seven to eight feet high remained standing all winter; the small seed and the open feeding ground beneath heavy cover made it much preferred over an adjacent food planting of Common Millet (*Setaria itatica*) and Grain Sorghum (*Sorghum vulgare*).

Analysis of flock composition from banding data was not attempted; for, although individual flocks could be identified at times, mixing of individuals caused by trapping operations undoubtedly disturbed flock composition.—Paul Bruce Dowling, c/o August A. Busch Memorial Wildlife Area, Weldon Springs, Missouri.

Harris' Sparrow Transient Return; Other Sparrow Records.—On October 1, 1955, I secured my first return on this species, a bird banded as immature on October 13, 1953. This is the first return after banding over 8,000 individuals in the last thirty years. On May 4, 1940, a bird caught by Harry K. Hutter at Aberdeen, South Dakota was one that I banded September 16, 1937. Recoveries of this species have been: Oklahoma, 5; South Dakota and Texas, 2 each; Kansas, Minnesota and Missouri, 1 each. The Minnesota bird was banded in October and found dead the following May.

During the same period, 4,000 White-throated Sparrows have yielded no returns, three recoveries from Arkansas and one each from North Dakota, Oklahoma and Texas. The North Dakota bird was found at Southam (130 miles NW) in May after banding in September.

Gambel's Sparrows to the number of 786 have yielded a single recovery from Nebraska, two and one-half years after banding. White-crowned Sparrows, 334, and Lincoln's Sparrows, 1300, have produced neither recoveries nor returns.—O. A. Stevens, Fargo, N. D.

Bending a Net-Lane.—When using mist nets at a permanent banding station, it is often desirable to lay out permanent net-lanes in heavy cover or at its edge. At times it is hard to place posts for such net-lanes in the most desirable spots for capturing birds, because of the terrain, the location of trees and shrubs too large to move or too valuable to cut down, or the length of nets received. If a later batch of nets is different in length, it may be hard to duplicate an existing pattern of net-lanes.

One solution is to bend the net, at any desired angle, around a smooth pipe, set directly in the ground or in a pipe socket in the ground. The height above ground should be not less than that of the net posts. It is helpful to make a simple wire "S" hook to hold the top trammel near the top of the pipe, as the net will slide quite readily. If such a pipe is in a line of several nets, it has the incidental advantage of allowing very rapid access to the other side of the line. A rusty pipe, or a rough wooden pole, would tend to damage the net and be hard to handle.—E. Alexander Bergstrom.

RECENT LITERATURE

BANDING

(See also Numbers 11, 13, 24, 27, 33, 35, 44, 46)

1. Sixth Preliminary List of Recoveries of Birds Ringed in Greenland. (Sjette foreløbige liste over genfundne grønlandske ringfugle.) Finn Salomonsen. 1955. *Dansk Ornithologisk Forenings Tidsskrift*, 49(2): 130-135. (From the English Summary.) Gives the details of 36 recoveries of 7 species, including some splendid transoceanic ones. Included are a Snow Bunting from Quebec; a Wheatear from France; one Iceland Gull from Labrador, one from Scotland, another from the Faroes; six Murres and a Puffin from Newfoundland; and a score more Whitefronted Geese from Ireland.—O. L. Austin, Jr.

2. Additional Recoveries of Birds Ringed in W. Jutland. (Flere resultater af ringmærkninger af vestjyske fugle.) *Dansk Ornithologisk Forenings Tidsskrift*, 49(3): 186-191. (From the English summary.) From the 1167 birds (mostly juvenals) the author banded at West Jutland 1948-51, he has received 41 recoveries, an enviable 3.5 percent. He gives here the raw data without further comment.—O. L. Austin, Jr.