

and 9 months after banding and an estimated 984 km (610 air miles) from the banding site. This distance, following a straight line from Sinton, Texas to Veracruz traverses water almost the entire distance. Assuming that Barn Owls do not undertake sustained flights across large expanses of water as the Gulf of Mexico, the actual movement of this bird was far greater than indicated. There is no record of this bird revisiting any of the 20 or more nest boxes during the intervening period despite repeated inspections of the boxes each year.

Whereas it is possible that this bird was banded while enroute farther north, and thus not of the southern Barn Owl population recognized by Stewart (1952), it seems more probable that it was a member of the local breeding population. Nearly 70 percent of 112 Barn Owl nests studied at the Welder Wildlife Foundation between 1965 and 1971 were initiated in January, February, and March (Ottini et al., 1972). Further, Stewart's (1952:237) map of the geographic displacement of northern Barn Owls completely lacks any recoveries from as far south as the 28th parallel, the site of this bird's initial handling (i.e., none of the northern Barn Owls are known to move into south Texas and Mexico).

The longevity of this bird is also noteworthy because it was in at least its ninth year of life when recovered. Stewart (1952) found that the average age of Barn Owls banded as nestlings was about 1.5 years with the oldest bird living to 11.5 years. Additionally, Stewart emphasized the difference in longevity between the average life span of the northern and southern populations. The southern birds had an average life span of about 2.5 years whereas the northern birds had a shorter span of slightly more than one year. Henny (*Bird-Banding*, 40: 277-290, 1969) found that mortality was greater among northern Barn Owls, presumably because of winter stress.

The second record concerns a Barn Owl of known age. This bird, banded 776-64611 on 2 June 1974, was captured as an owlet in a nest box at the Welder Wildlife Foundation. It was recovered near Camargo, Tamaulipas in northern Mexico on 22 October 1976. The recovery site is 248 km (154 mi) from the banding location. This record gives further support to the contention that southern Barn Owls may move distances well in excess of those data published earlier (Stewart, 1952) and suggests that these movements occur without the rigors of severe winter weather acting as a proximate factor. I am indebted to W. F. Kennison and to Eugenio Saenz S. for reporting the banded birds.—Eric G. BOLEN, *Rob and Bessie Welder Wildlife Foundation, Sinton, TX 78387*. Received 17 August 1977, accepted 23 September 1977.

Possible Weather-related Southward Movements of Common Grackles in Early January.—As part of a continuing study on the roosting and feeding behavior of communally roosting blackbirds, I spent the period 8-13 January 1977 at or near Russellville, Kentucky, watching the activities of these birds. Common Grackles (*Quiscalus quiscula*) started arriving at the roosting site soon after my arrival at 1600 on 8 January. The birds came from various directions but mostly from the south. Then at 1647, four minutes before sunset, they started leaving the roosting site in a southward direction. I did not attempt to follow the birds, only tracking them as far as they could be seen from the roosting site. The flow from the roosting site continued 11 min and involved approximately 14,500 birds. Although the movement can be seen as a mere change of roosting sites, the direction chosen indicates that it can also be considered a component of southward migration. The flight consisted entirely of Common Grackles, and the remaining roosting congregation of approximately 45,000 birds consisted of more than 98 percent grackles.

Because 8.3 cm of snow fell on 7 January, grackles were handicapped in their food finding by the snow cover. That they left the roosting site flying in the direction from which most of them had just come from foraging suggests that the birds may have been returning to areas where more favorable conditions for their living previously had been found.

In walking about 380 m through the roosting site on 12 and 13 January, I found six dead grackles. I was 2-5 m from the birds found when I first spotted them, with an average of 3.6 m. Thus, I covered a strip about 7.2 m wide, and in walking covered an area of about 0.3 ha each day. The mortality indicated that the birds were being stressed, for, when no shooting occurred, I searched for dead birds at blackbird-starling roosting

sites in North Carolina after different snowfalls without finding any. Because the gizzards of the six birds all contained food, indicating that death had not resulted from starvation, apparently many of the birds responded to increased environmental stress by moving to a new roosting site.

Initiation of the southward movement was made in the evening at the roosting site, corresponding with spring departures of Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) from their roosting site as reported by Wynne-Edwards (*Brit. Birds*, **23**: 138–153, 170–180, 1929) and of Red-winged Blackbirds (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) reported by Stickley and Steffen (*Wilson Bull.*, **86**: 84–85, 1974). Crepuscular or nocturnal starting of migratory flights by blackbirds and Starlings may be more common than is generally known. If the birds started their migratory flights in the daylight hours, they would be using time in traveling that could otherwise be used foraging.

Although my observations indicate that Common Grackles may move southward in early winter responding to weather-related difficulties, this should not be taken to indicate that the regular fall migration is similarly motivated. The fall migration is started at a season of the year when heavy snowfall does not occur and food supplies are abundant, and it is probably motivated by totally different influences than was the case with the movement described in this note.—PAUL A. STEWART, 203 Mooreland Drive, Oxford, NC 27565. Received 25 April 1977, accepted 8 August 1977.