
News, Notes, Comments

GOLDEN OLDIES TWO LIVE RECOVERIES OF LONG-LIVED NORTH AMERICAN HAWKS

To a bird bander, the live recovery of a bird you've banded is always gratifying, especially if the bird has lived for a long period of time. Obviously, such recoveries yield valuable information on wild bird longevity; but in addition to that, it just plain makes you feel good. Here are two recent "golden oldies" of note.



On 4 November 1971, I banded a HY Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) USFWS #877-10669, at the Kittatinny Mountains Raptor Banding Station, Sussex County, New Jersey. This bird was recaptured by Roger Jones at the Short Hill Mountain Raptor Banding Station, Loudoun County, Virginia, on 8 November 1991—20 years, 4 days after I banded it.

A Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) HY-F, USFWS #987-02966), I banded on 20 October 1974 at the same New Jersey location was recaptured by David Fluri in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, on 29 October 1990—16 years, 9 days after banding. Both birds were in good condition when recaptured and were released.

The estimated minimum age of a bird is calculated by the Bird Banding Laboratory by assuming a hatching date of 1 June. This means the Red-tailed Hawk had lived 20 years, 5 months and the Goshawk, 16 years, 6 months. The Bird Banding Laboratory files contain very few records of birds of either of these species having reached these ages.

As of 30 December 1991, including the two birds described here, there have been only eight Red-tailed Hawks that have lived over 20 years and only four Northern Goshawks that have lived over 13 years. The longevity record for the Red-tailed Hawk (2 individuals) is 22 years, 7 months. The

longevity record for the Northern Goshawk is held by the bird described here, 16 years, 5 months and is only the second record of a Northern Goshawk having lived over 16 years.

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SYSTEMATIC ATTEMPT BY TUFTED TITMOUSE TO FREE ITSELF FROM MIST NET

During banding operations in Tallahassee, Florida, on 26 April 1992, I witnessed an unusual behavior of an adult female Eastern Tufted Titmouse (*Parus bicolor*). As I approached the 1-1/4" mesh mist net in which the bird was caught, I noticed that the bird was pecking at what appeared to be its tarsus. My first guess was that it might be pecking at its band; but when I came closer, I realized that the bird was not banded. The feet, in fact, were not tangled in the net. Instead, the net was torn around them, leaving a large hole through which the bird could have escaped easily. Probably, it was merely a matter of me coming a few minutes too soon.

There is no doubt in my mind that the titmouse had systematically freed its feet from the entanglement by the nylon threads. Considering the unenviable and certainly dangerous situation the bird had found itself in, it clearly deserves credit for keeping a cool head.

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