

BANDING NEWS AND NOTES

Compiled by

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As the DVOC is historically very active in ornithological research, it should come as no surprise that at least 26 members possess federal bird-banding permits. Some have been banding for many years and have contributed much to our knowledge of Delaware Valley bird life.

Bird-banding is a valuable tool for use in bird study and is not an end in itself. Due to the tremendous number of birds that have been banded, the recovery records have practically overwhelmed the Fish and Wildlife Service, which administers the bird-banding program in the United States. In fact, even though records are now kept by computers, it takes five to eight months for a bander to learn of the recovery of one of his birds! During the 12-year period ending in 1931, about 790,000 birds were banded in the United States. During 1968 the Bird-banding Laboratory received records of 1,269,778 birds that were banded! Because of this work load, permits are at the present time issued only for use in a specific research project. The Banding Office strongly urges all banders to work on a particular project, and most banders now are doing that.

I hope to demonstrate here some of the many ways that bird-banding is useful and to make some interesting records available to members who perhaps would not hear of them unless they were to read banding journals or similar publications. If you have a project in mind in which you think banding would be helpful, talk to one of the members who has a permit. There is a good chance that he may be able to cooperate with you on it.

Henry Armistead has been manning an Operation Recovery station at Hooper's Island, Maryland. In 1967 he banded 770 birds of 69 species there, during 22 days. He banded an Osprey near Hooper's Island in June, 1966, and it was shot four months later near Bogota, Colombia!

A word should be said here about "Operation Recovery". This is a cooperative project with which many banders are involved. With a large number of banders trapping birds at various locations on a migration route, the chances for recovery within a short period of time are increased. Our knowledge of migration patterns increases accordingly. The largest "Operation Recovery" station is in our own backyard, at Island Beach State Park, New Jersey.

One club member who was active at Island Beach Operation Recovery in 1968 was Emil Berger. He was one of twenty-six banders who banded the

almost unbelievable total of 26,988 birds of 133 species! Emil also banded 39 Black Skimmer nestlings that year at Stone Harbor, N.J. He found an average of one nestling and one egg per nest.

Maurice Broun, Curator Emeritus of Hawk Mountain, has retired to a farm not too far distant from Hawk Mountain (but don't look for him around the farm from September to November). In a recent issue of *Ebba News*, publication of the Eastern Bird Banding Association, there was an interesting item about a bird which Maurice banded, and he has given us permission to cite it here. During the winter and early spring of 1964 Maurice banded 550 Pine Siskins at Hawk Mountain. Of all the 550 banded only one, #108-08458, has been recovered. But what a surprise bird students received from one lone recovery! It was banded on May 2, 1964, and "found dead" nearly 20 months later, on December 30, 1965, at Seattle, Washington! This is truly a remarkable record and should lend encouragement to James Woodford, who banded so many hundreds of Siskins near Medford Lakes, N.J., during the 1968-1969 winter. Maurice also wrote of an adult female Evening Grosbeak which he banded at Hawk Mountain on January 23, 1956. It was trapped and released by another bander at Linwood, N.J., on November 30, 1968. The bird was at least 14 years old, which may be a longevity record for the species.

Joseph Cadbury, a long-time bander in this area, finds that banding is a valuable tool for him to use at the Germantown Friends School, where he teaches. He operates an "Operation Recovery" at French Creek State Park, Pa., for two weeks each fall in conjunction with a school camping trip. During the summer he bands gulls, terns, cormorants, and petrels at an Audubon camp in Maine. Probably his most interesting record is the recovery of a Double-crested Cormorant five miles from the place of banding 23 years later!

Ray Hendrick has a banding station near Doylestown, Pa., and has banded over 1300 birds of 44 species in the last three years. He also is setting up a Bluebird box trail, with an eye toward banding as many nestlings as possible.

George Hitchner has been very active in Operation Recovery at Cape May Point, New Jersey. He led a team of seven banders and ten assistants there in the fall of 1968, and from September 21 to October 12 they banded a total of 2,841 birds of 75 species. It may seem surprising that the most common bird trapped was the Gray-cheeked Thrush, with 308 banded. The Cape May station is badly in need of additional help in the fall, and if you are interested in banding, speak to George. It is not necessary to have a bird-banding permit to help there. George also has been working with William Middleton on a White-crowned Sparrow project in south Jersey.

Joseph Jacobs has been banding Ospreys in southern New Jersey for nearly thirty years, and some of his exploits are legendary among banders. It

is hard work in the hot sun, and each bird banded comes at the price of many hours in the field. But with the decline in numbers that the Osprey is now facing, these banding records will prove invaluable to researchers working to save the Osprey.

Edward Manners has been banding and color-marking Saw-whet Owls in areas along the Delaware River below Camden. He has traced the ups and downs of this interesting little owl in our region, and we have learned much from his work.

Raymond Middleton, of Norristown, is probably the "premier" bander in this area. He has had a federal bird-banding permit since July, 1921! If all the papers and articles which he has written for ornithological publications were put together, it would no doubt be a lengthy book. He has taken time to send us some age records which may be of interest:

Blue Jay	— 12 years old	Scarlet Tanager	— 9 years old
Blue Jay	— 8 years old	Brown Thrasher	— 7 years old
Blue Jay	— 6 years old	Grackle	— 8 years old
Robin	— 9 years old	Red-eyed Vireo	— 7 years old
Robin	— 8 years old	Catbird	— 7 years old

He has had Blue Jays which he banded in Norristown recovered in Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. The value of nearly fifty years of banding records from the Delaware Valley can hardly be calculated. But you can be sure that ornithologists will be studying and analyzing these records for decades to come.

Do you see many White-crowned Sparrows while birding in south Jersey? Believe it or not, William Middleton and George Hitchner have banded 640 in four years at one location in Gloucester County, New Jersey! They hope to publish a paper on this project when they analyze all the data they have gathered on this winter population of White-crowns.

William Middleton had an interesting recovery of a Mourning Dove. He banded this bird at his station in Wenonah, N.J., on July 20, 1952. It was shot by a hunter eight miles south of Andalusia, Alabama, on December 31, 1954. He was stunned by this report because he was born in Andalusia, Alabama, and hunted doves in the area where this dove was killed when he was an "unguided teenager"!

Probably no DVOC bander bands as many birds as does John Miller. He spends literally every spare minute banding birds, and it is a mystery to this bander how he has kept out of the divorce courts for so long! He sent us a list of long distance recoveries in which he thought Club members would be interested. Here are some of the outstanding ones:

<i>Species</i>	<i>Banding Location</i>	<i>Recovery Location</i>
Little Blue Heron	Absecon, N.J.	Trinidad
Glossy Ibis	Absecon, N.J.	Cuba
Glossy Ibis	Absecon, N.J.	Jamaica
Louisiana Heron	Absecon, N.J.	Puerto Rico
Pintail	Tinicum Refuge, Phila., Pa.	Quebec, Canada
Mallard	Tinicum Refuge, Phila., Pa.	Minnesota
Black Duck	Tinicum Refuge, Phila., Pa.	Ottawa, Canada
Black Skimmer	Stone Harbor, N.J.	Florida
Common Egret	Absecon, N.J.	Tinicum Refuge, Phila., Pa.

John has banded many Laughing Gulls at Stone Harbor, N.J., and recovery locations for this species include Newfoundland, Panama, Cuba, Honduras, Colombia, and Lancaster, Pa.!

William Pepper is another veteran bander from Chestnut Hill. He spends two weeks each fall banding at Island Beach Operation Recovery, and during 1968 he banded a total of 3,913 birds of 101 species. One interesting record of which he wrote was a Catbird he trapped in Philadelphia which had been banded in Ashtabula, Ohio. He also told us of a Grackle he banded in July, 1961. This bird has returned to his traps every spring since, and in one day in the spring of 1969 he had to throw it out of his traps eleven times.

Joseph Stokes, Jr. is working on a project which involves color-marking Robins to see whether the adults feed one or more young to the exclusion of others. This is an example of research that can be done on even the most common species.

James Woodford has a very productive banding station in the Jersey pines near Medford Lakes. In addition to banding all those Pine Siskins, which is chronicled elsewhere in this issue, he has banded many Evening Grosbeaks and has assisted at Island Beach Operation Recovery.

Dr. C. Brooke Worth has retired to that Valhalla of all birders, Cape May. But he is on a busman's holiday and has set up a banding station at his home. The results of a blackbird study are included in the general notes section of this issue. Dr. Worth has also banded warblers during the fall migration.

It seems to us that Witmer Stone would have been very impressed by the many contributions to ornithological research that have been made by DVOG members. He would undoubtedly have been quite surprised by the tremendous numbers of birds that are now being banded and by the great variety of ways in which banding is utilized in projects conducted for the most part by laymen.