

Recent Literature

This section aims at providing a brief summary of some items of particular interest to bird banders. No attempt will be made to cover the whole field of ornithology and those requiring this are referred to *Bird Banding*. Those seeking a coverage of additional literature relevant to banding are referred to *The Ring*. Enquiries concerning these two publications should be addressed to:

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2. The Editor, *The Ring*, Laboratory of Ornithology, Sienkiewicza 21, Wrocław, Poland.

BANDING AND RECOVERY REPORTS

Long Island Bird Observatory: 1965 Report. D. J. T. Hussell, W. A. Martin, R. W. Stamp and P. S. Woodford, 1967. *Ontario Bird Banding*, 3: 30-78.

Some 16,400 birds of 158 species were banded at the observatory during 1965: 166 recoveries were reported, and 59 foreign birds were recovered at the station. Spring and autumn migration peaks of several species are listed. Recoveries of most species are given in detail, but the many recoveries of several species of ducks are presented in simplified tabular form. The 277 species recorded at the observatory are listed, and details are given of the occurrence of 54 species of particular interest. Research projects in hand at the observatory are summarized.

ANALYTICAL STUDIES

Studies of Snipe at Partridge Creek, Ontario. Leslie M. Tuck, 1967. *Bird Banding*, 3: 90-94.

Concentrations of snipe occur prior to autumnal migration, and during 1963 and 1965 some 1500 snipe were banded at Partridge Creek, Ontario, Canada. Snipe were captured with clover-leaf traps and by mist netting. The traps were simply made of wire mesh, with cloth netting tops; the netting was essential to prevent head injuries to the snipe. Large mesh mist nets were used, and the most productive periods for mist netting were just before dusk and before dawn: the apparent decrease in efficiency of vision of waders at these times has been previously recorded (*Ontario Bird Banding*, 3:79). Netting sites were sometimes altered to take advantage of the fact that 'snipe always take off into the wind'. A strip of luminous tape was attached to at least one pole in each set to assist in locating the nets in darkness. A short summary of recoveries of snipe banded at Partridge Creek is given, and localities are mapped.

Net Hours: The Myth of their Importance. Mabel Warburton, 1967. *EBBA News*, 30: 158-160.

American banders use the factors of 'net-hours' and

'birds per net hour' to compare netting activities in different areas and or times. This concept is critically examined, and the writer concludes that the practice is 'so dependent upon outside factors as to be meaningless'. Intangible factors mentioned include the number of birds at the net site; siting of nets; method of setting nets; size of birds in relation to mesh of nets; wind strength and weather; height at which birds pass the area and time of day when netting was carried out. There are, of course, many other factors which influence netting rates but which cannot be quantitatively assessed. This paper is recommended to Australian banders who might contemplate adoption of the concept of netting rates as advocated in *The Aust. Bird Bander*, 5: 32.

The Influence of Fat on Bird Weight. Robert C. Leberman, 1967. *EBBA News*, 30: 181-184.

A sample of 334 transient White-throated Sparrows at Powdermill Nature Reserve, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., was measured, weighed, and the fat classes estimated. The importance of having one person only estimating fat classes is emphasised, as fat class estimates are partly subjective and not absolute. The sample is tabulated by wing-length and fat class, and shows the mean weights for each group. There is a steady increase in weight within each fat class as wing length increases. For birds with the same wing length there is a steady increase in weight as their fat class increases.

Further Observations on Ticks at Island Beach State Park Bird Banding Station. Robert Snetsinger and Dorothy Bordser, 1967. *EBBA News*, 30: 185-186.

At Island Beach State Park, New Jersey, U.S.A., 12.9 percent of 1176 birds examined for ticks were infested. Birds associated with the lower strata of vegetation tend to be infested with great numbers of larval and nymph ticks that are normally associated with rabbits, particularly as adult ticks. The average number of ticks per infested bird was 10.2, but one bird carried 64.

Notes on Recoveries and Breeding Behaviour of Adélie Penguins of Known Age at Cape Hallett. B. F. Reid, F. C. Kinsky, H. J. Cranfield and R. C. Wood, 1967. *Notornis*, 14: 140-145.

Data from 50 recoveries of 31 individuals from 457 Adélie Penguin chicks banded at the large Cape Hallett rookeries are summarized. None of the banded chicks was recovered at the rookery as a yearling. Recovery data indicate that 5-10 percent of the surviving 2-year-old birds come ashore during the summer months, some 25-30 percent of the surviving 3-year-old birds and approximately 80 percent of the 4-year-old birds. Earliest breeding age recorded was 4 years and only 25 percent of 4-year-old birds recorded on shore bred. Recoveries suggest that 80-90 percent of 5-year-olds and 85-95 percent of 6-year-old birds bred. Data show that only one egg is laid by 4-year-old females; the two 5-year-old females laid only one egg each, but the two 6-year-old females laid 2 eggs each.

Older birds tend to arrive at the rookery earlier in the season than younger birds. Established breeders tend to shift to the central areas of the colonies and young birds tend to occupy peripheral nest sites. Fifty percent of the birds were first recovered at the colony of origin. Limited data indicate that pair bonds between young breeders may not be as durable as those formed by older birds.

Population Changes and Mortality of the Mute Swan for Britain. M. A. Ogilvie. 1967. *Wildfowl Trust, 18th Annual Report*: 64-73.

An index based on winter counts shows that the population of the Mute Swan in Britain underwent a 25 per cent decline between the years 1960-61 and 1964-65, following a peak in 1959-60. In the last three years the numbers have remained constant in the country as a whole, though an increase has taken place in the north and a decrease in the midlands and the west. There is no migration and little movement of swans other than following watercourses. The average annual mortality for swans banded when under one year old, excluding recoveries in the year of banding, is 40.5 per cent, and for birds banded when over one year 38.5 per cent. The cold weather in the winters of 1962 and 1963 increased both mortality and recovery rates, but mortality was lower than average in 1963-64. There is possibly greater survival in the third and fourth years of life than in the first two. Overhead wires are responsible for over 44 per cent of recoveries where the cause of death is known; young birds are not more vulnerable to this hazard than older ones. Other causes of death include oiling, disease, cold weather, shooting and fighting.

Results of Wildfowl Ringing at Abberton Reservoir, Essex, 1949 to 1966. C. B. Wainwright. 1967. *Wildfowl Trust, 18th Annual Report*: 28-35.

Between 1949 and 1966, 37,924 ducks and 376 swans were banded at Abberton Reservoir, yielding 8,162 recoveries to date. Teal make up 70 per cent of the catch and Mallard 21 percent. The seasonal variation in the catch is discussed and an association is found between the catch of Teal and the mean of the monthly winter counts on the reservoir. Tabular summaries of the recoveries show marked differences between species in proportions recovered locally and overseas. Teal have been reported from 35 countries. Mallard recoveries from within 30 miles of Abberton show that there has not been a falling off in the recovery rate due to 'reporter boredom'. Average adult mortality rates include Mallard 43 percent, Teal 45 percent, Garganey 47 percent and Gadwall 52 percent.

TECHNIQUES

The Use of Cannon and Rocket Projected Nets for Trapping Shorebirds. Max C. Thompson and Robert L. DeLong. 1967. *Bird-Banding*, 38: 214-218.

St. George Island in the Bering Sea is used by Turnstones as a major feeding stop, and up to 20,000 birds occur at the peak period, with concentrations of 5,000-6,000 in one small area. Initial attempts to obtain large numbers with mist nets failed due to high winds, foxes, and the ability of the Turnstones to see the nets. Projected nets were successfully used during the years 1964-1966 to net a total of 17,517 Turnstones (or 127 per firing) plus several hundred other waders. Birds taken per firing increased from 87.1 to 110.2 to 175.9 over the three years. The authors state that these numbers of Turnstones would not have been captured by any other method known to them.

Modification of the Bal-chatri Trap for Shrikes. William S. Clark. 1967. *FBB.A News*, 30: 147-149.

Bal-chatri traps are effective for hawks, but are not suitable for birds which use their beak to grab, kill and carry the prey. Such birds usually land near the trap, walk around it, and try to get at the bait through the sides; they thus avoid the top nooses of the conventional Bal-chatri. These birds can be readily trapped by extending the base of the trap to form a skirt around the trap proper, and attaching additional nooses to this skirt. The method of construction of the modified trap is described and illustrated. Wild mice are the best bait, and white domestic mice the least acceptable. The modified trap has an obvious application for such Australian species as butcherbirds, magpies, kookaburras, etc.

Banding Purple Finches and Evening Grosbeaks in Wisconsin. Edna Koenig. 1967. *LBB.A News*, 30: 152-157.

The development of a banding project from the winter feeding of several species is described. Up to 25 feeders are used, and in one winter 1 1/2 tons of sunflower seeds were fed. The conversion of two sil feeders into traps is described and illustrated in detail. Retraps of Evening Grosbeaks banded elsewhere are tabulated.

Mist Netting Shorebirds at Long Point, Lake Erie. Gary Page. 1967. *Ontario Bird Banding*, 3: 79-83.

During previous years walk-in traps (to which the waders showed no desire to walk in) and mist nets (which were seen and easily avoided) had been used in attempting to capture waders, with little success. Relative success has now been achieved by mist netting during the twilight hours, when an apparent decrease in efficiency of the vision of birds at this time makes them susceptible to mist netting. The importance of siting the nets across favoured locations is stressed. Flocks often responded to the calls of birds which had been netted, and whirled around and around the nets until most of the flock had been netted. It is thus advantageous to wait for this reaction. Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers are readily netted, and 75-80 percent of individuals can be taken most evenings. Sanderlings, Spotted Sandpipers and Semipalmated Plover are very difficult to net.

Iris Colour and Age of Sharp-shinned Hawks. J. O. I. Roberts. 1967. *Ontario Bird Banding*, 3: 95-106.

The iris colour of Sharp-shinned Hawks migrating through the Great Lakes area of Canada and U.S.A. takes four or five years to pass through the straw and yellow tones of the autumnal immatures to the ultimate deep red colour. By comparing the iris colour with the colours of Villalobos' (1947) 'Colour Atlas', some 67 per cent of autumn migrants born in previous years may be classified certainly as sub-adult or adult, and this may be increased to about 82 per cent by combining iris colour with a relatively simple plumage examination. About 18 percent of birds can be classified confidently as birds in their second calendar year following birth.

Age Determination of Corvidae. Amadeo M. Rea. 1967. *Western Bird Bander*, 42: 42-47.

Feather shape and mouth colour allow the age of North American Common Crows (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) to be determined, and these two factors are described and illustrated. Juvenal flight feathers are

retained for approximately 13 months. Juvenal rectrices are definitely pointed and somewhat narrower than the squared-off adult rectrices. By early summer the faded brown rectrices in first year birds may be badly worn, while adult birds exhibit black scarcely-worn feathers. By mid-summer the incoming central, adult-shaped rectrices contrast unmistakably with the outer juvenal ones. Similarly the new, glossy-purplish, adult inner primaries and greater coverts are contrasted with the worn, brown outer primaries and alula. Moulting adults show little contrast. In summer, the recently fledged, juvenal birds are easily distinguished from first year and adult birds by their flimsy dull dark-grey contour feathers. These are replaced with metallic, glossy blue-black feathers in late summer and autumn.

Recently fledged juvenals in summer have the mouth and the angle of the mouth all pink. These parts gradually become pigmented, but some pink is still evident as late as spring. First year birds still show pinkish soft parts surrounded by pinkish-grey, while no adults showed pink or pink-grey in any part of the mouth.

An unusually marked And Ringed Turnstone

On 28, 29 and 30 December, 1967 an unusually marked and ringed Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*) was observed at Long Reef, about six miles north of Sydney Heads, New South Wales. It was first seen by David Sawyer and later by other observers including K. A. Hindwood who kindly reported the following details:—

"About a dozen Turnstones were present in the area. One of these had the mantle, back and rump dyed a bright pink; some pink, apparently in the form of a subterminal band, was also on the tail. The colour of the back and on the tail stood out conspicuously when the bird was in flight. The left leg had a bright apple-green plastic (?) band on it, but it could not be ascertained if the right leg had a band of any sort."

This bird was seen by a number of observers during January, associating with seven or eight other Turnstones. When conditions for observing were ideal, a metal band was seen on the right leg. By 28 January 1968, the pink on the back was very 'washed out'.

We would be very pleased to hear from any reader who knows anything of the origin of this marking and banding.—**Hon. Editor.**

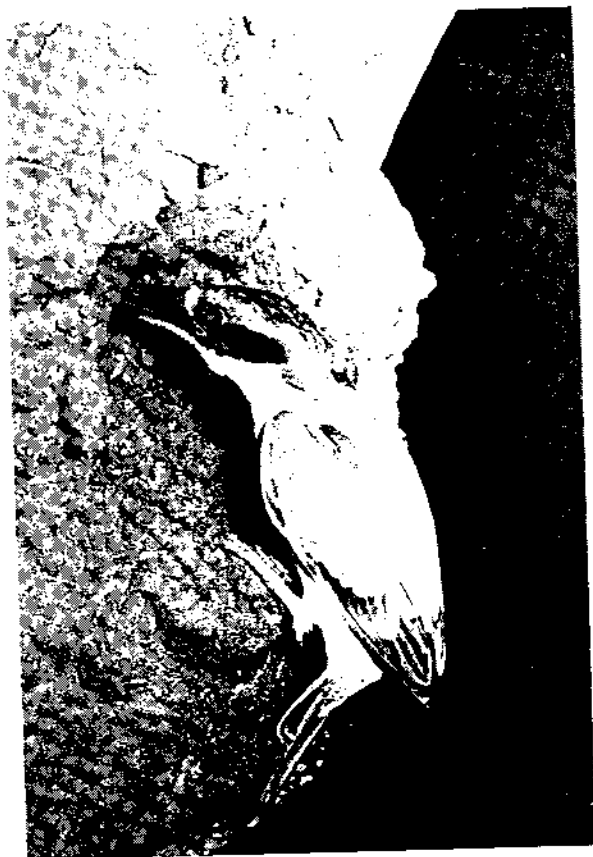
MISCELLANEOUS

An "Ancient" Herring Gull. Dr Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr. 1967. *EBBA News*, 30: 180.

A Herring Gull, banded as a 10-day-old chick on 29 June 1930 off Maine, U.S.A., was found dead on 20 June 1966 on the shore of Lake Michigan, just 36 years later. This appears to be the world record for the interval between banding and recovery for a wild bird (see note p. 9). However, the Oystercatcher mentioned in *The Aust. Bird Bander* 5:50 probably lived longer.

Ringed Victims of the "Torrey Canyon". Bob Hudson. 1967. *BTO News*, 23: 7.

Most of the June 1967 bulletin is concerned with the aftermath of the 'Torrey Canyon' disaster. Sixteen recoveries of banded seabirds resulted and these are briefly detailed.



Female Forest Kingfisher at entrance to its nest in a termites' nest. The white wing spot is not visible in this position but the 'interrupted' collar indicates the bird's sex. Photo: N. Chaffer.