

ONTARIO BIRD BANDERS' ASSOCIATION

BANDING NEWSLETTER NO. 4

February 7th, 1957.

Many of us will remember 1956 as a co-operative year among Ontario banders. New banders were able to benefit from knowledge gained over the years by older hands, and many a new friendship was formed. The co-operative banding projects have shown gratifying results, as will be seen by the report on Point Pelee, and the experience gained will be invaluable for the larger scale projects now being planned.

LIBRARY:

Some excellent publications have appeared throughout the world on the subject of bird banding, and the Association is planning to form a library. At present available are copies of 1956 numbers of "The Ring" published in England by Dr. W. Ryzewski, and "Bird-Ringing" by R. M. Lockley, an excellent handbook describing techniques of banding, handling birds, trapping, as well as weighing, measuring and recording. To borrow any of these, contact the secretary.

WHOOPIING CRANES:

The subject of Whooping Cranes was raised at a recent meeting. Mr. Leach, a biologist on the Mississippi Flyway, has advanced a proposal to keep a percentage of hand-picked birds in captivity for breeding purposes, since this species is still facing extinction under its natural conditions. At one time a percentage of Whooping Cranes were non-migratory. This plan is favoured by Wildlife authorities both in Canada and the United States, although it is opposed by the Audubon Society. The banders who were present at the discussion were in favour of the plan. May we have your comments?

ANNUAL MEETING:

The Federation of Ontario Naturalists is holding the 25th Annual Meeting at Peterborough on Feb. 15 - 16. It seemed an excellent opportunity to gather banders from various parts of the province and so a meeting has been arranged for Saturday, Feb. 16, at 10 a. m. in the Kawartha Room of the Empress Hotel. Mr. Dave Monroe and Dr. G. Stirrett will be on hand to address the meeting, and we hope Mr. T. Hennessy as well.

SPRING PROJECT:

A more ambitious banding project is proposed for this year. To date little work has been done on correlated banding stations in Ontario. A plan has been proposed to establish, during spring and fall migrations, a series of stations stretching from the Sandusky Shore line, South Bass Island, Pelee Island, Point Pelee Park, Rondeau Park, Long Point, Scarborough Bluffs, and Presqu'ile Point.

Each participating bander would use his own bands, and would file with the O. B. B. A. his reports which would include: band series used, daily species, daily totals, weights, parasite and weather. Forms will be provided to facilitate these reports.

It is anticipated that sufficient funds can be raised to equip each station with scales and ether jars for parasites, and some accommodation will be available (we hope).

Members who can participate should contact the Secretary before April 1st. Those who have not used mist nets can gain first hand instruction.

MEMBERS' NEWS:

ALDEN STRONG of Westport has been doing fine work with Bald Eagles and last year banded 4 young. He is locating nests now in preparation for spring banding. Evening Grosbeaks which he trapped at a local feeding station yielded foreign returns from Quebec and the New England States.

MARSHALL FIELD at St. Thomas has been busy getting established in his new position as Park Superintendent for Pinafore Park. However, he has found time to band 225 Cedar Waxwings who liked his berry bushes.

FRANK LOVESY who covers the Ajax area frequently has been re-trapping Tree Sparrows which he banded there last March. At present he is concentrating on banding Long-Eared and Short-Eared Owls.

FRANK SMITH, in between bird-carving, slipped out the other day and with the help of Bob Taylor banded an American Three-Toed Woodpecker (male) near Agincourt. Incidentally, the Dickcissel banded by Frank last August was the second of this species banded in Ontario, the first being banded by Dr. R. E. DeLury at Ottawa, Aug. 26, 1934, an adult female.

SAW-WHET OWLS:

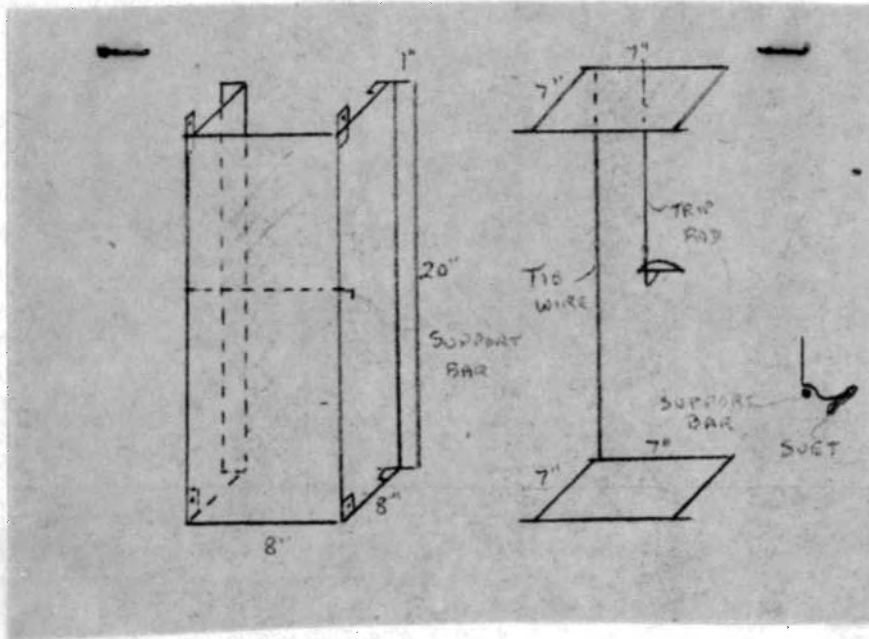
Saw-Whet Owls, discussed in the last Newsletter showed a marked decrease in the Toronto area. Six members report a total of 87 banded. Frank Smith accounted for 47 of these, which was less than half his last year's total.

RETURNS AND RECOVERIES:

STARLING - Banded Feb. 11, 52; found dead Nov. 18, 1956, 2 blocks from original banding place. Alf. Bunker.
 EVENING GROSBEEK - Banded March 14, 1956, Pickering, Ont. Found dead, July 13, 1956, 10 miles south of Chicoutimi, Que. Alf. Bunker.
 DOWNY WOODPECKER - Banded Sept. 30, 1956, Rice Lake. Found dead, Dec. 22, 1956. Toronto. Frank Smith.
 BLUE JAY - Banded Pickering, 1950, by L. McDougall. Return 1956, M. Speirs.

NEW MEMBERS:

Dr. and Mrs. J. M. Speirs, Cobble Hill, R. R. 2, Pickering, Ontario.



This is a modification of the Baldwin Woodpecker Trap which has been successful for Reg. James of Willowdale, catching Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers, Nuthatches, Creepers and even Blue Jay. 1/4" - 1/2" or 3/4" hardware cloth should be used, as rigidity is obtained without any framework. The doors or relating ties are shown separately. By fastening the suet to the "T" bar trip the bird will dislodge the trip and doors will close by own weight. A collecting door can be cut into any of the three sides making sure it does not interfere with trap mechanism. Trial and error adjustments are required to establish sensitivity of trip. To make portable cut 1/2" or 3/4" plywood 6" larger than trap dimensions and cover with cedar bark or other rough bark which is available. This should also be done to overcome the trouble when trap is fastened to a small diameter tree.

DON'T FORGET - PETERBOROUGH FEB. 16 - 10 a. m. KAWARTHA ROOM, EMPRESS HOTEL.

POINT PELEE BANDING STATION - SPRING, 1956.

Point Pelee has long been recognized as one of the finest locations in Ontario to study bird migration. The point is to the north of a chain of islands which form a natural migration route for birds crossing Lake Erie. Not only are there large concentrations of migrants at Point Pelee, but the unusual phenomenon of "reverse migration" is seen, i. e. migrating birds flying south off the point in the spring. In order to study migration at such a favoured place, in 1954 the Federation of Ontario Naturalists established a permanent banding station, the first Heligoland trap to be used in Canada. Results were encouraging, and the station was again in operation in 1955. Several banders who were later to become active in the O. B. A. had assisted the Federation's project, and in March of

1956 our Association was given the opportunity to carry on the project under the sponsorship of the F. O. N.

In the early part of April a party arrived to repair the Heligoland trap which had suffered some damage during the winter, and to effect modifications in design. Although Brown Creepers were present in considerable numbers there was little time for trapping.

Arrangements had been made by the F. O. N. to have a cottage at the disposal of the banders, and banding was scheduled to start on May 1.

On April 29 a severe storm lashed southern Ontario, and the banding team detoured by Sarnia to investigate reports of large numbers of birds washed up on the shores of Lake Huron. Hundreds of dead birds were discovered along the shore, including a White-Throated Sparrow which had been banded at Leonard, Michigan, April 28, 1954. The corresponding wave of migrants reaching Point Pelee at that time was substantial, and was reported by Neil Kelley of Detroit to have exceeded any movement he had previously observed there.

The banding team arrived on the night of May 3rd, and trapping was begun the following day, the Heligoland trap was in operation, and mist nets were used as auxiliaries. The nets were used to great advantage to catch flybacks from the Heligoland trap, and they accounted for approximately 70% of the birds.

A marked weather front over the region May 5 - 6 coincided with the arrival of three early species of warblers, Black and White, Myrtle and Palm.

Gentle, mild weather on May 7 - 8 permitted overnight arrival of White-Throated and White-Crowned Sparrows, and also the first Lincoln Sparrows. Tree, Bank and Barn Swallows arrived during the morning of the 8th. The warblers previously mentioned left during the night of May 8 - 9 on a steady flow of air from the southwest.

The next three days produced a repetition of the frontal weather of May 5 - 6 with strong temperature contrasts and severe storms. Birds moving north in the warm air evidently found the Pelee region a convenient stop-over point and populations were high on May 10 - 13. A warm sector overhead on the night of May 13 - 14 brought a further influx.

The night of May 12 produced some unusual occurrences. Shortly after a severe squall, a tapping was heard on the door of the banders' cottage, and when the door was opened a White-Crowned Sparrow flew in to be greeted by several astonished banders. After being caught and banded he spent the night on the verandah, and flew away in the morning none the worse for the unexpected hospitality. Plans had been made to try night banding, and it was discovered that the storm had forced down considerable numbers of Brown Thrashers, Catbirds and Empidonax Flycatchers which were perching in the larger trees. Several of these were picked off the lower limbs, as well as a few individuals of other species, the most unusual being a Yellow Rail discovered perching in a small cedar 6 feet from the ground. Jacklighting proved effective because of the darkness of the night. On later attempts it was found that on moonlight nights the birds would take off in moth-like flight when caught in the rays of the light.

During May 10 - 13 the following species arrived: Least Flycatchers, Blue-Gray Gnatcatchers, Solitary, Philadelphia and Warbling Vireos, Orange Crowned, Nashville, Magnolia, Black-Throated Green, Chestnut-Sided, and Blackburnian Warblers. On the night of May 11 - 12 Yellow Warblers arrived.

The weather tide then turned dramatically and temperatures dropped to near freezing. For three days or more the insectivorous birds were in difficulties, and Flycatchers, Swallows, Warblers and Tanagers resorted to feeding along the shoreline and were easy to trap. A Bank Swallow banded at noon on May 16 was taken from a cat at Tilbury some two hours later and released uninjured.

The rest of the month featured overnight one day "in and out" waves wherein the following species predominated, especially on the nights of May 18 - 19 and May 22 - 23: Red-Eyed Vireos, Oven-Birds, Yellow-Bellied Flycatchers, Indigo Buntings, Tennessee, Magnolia, Blackburnian, Can. and Bay-Breasted Warblers.

The station was closed on the 31st of May, and collecting boxes stored at Aviation Inn. Due to the efforts of the following banders and the assistance given by visitors to the station, 2837 birds of 102 species were banded in a total of 27 trapping days.

BANDERS:

May 4th and May 26th,	Neil T. Kelly,	Detroit, Mich.
May 5th to May 8th,	Alden Strong,	Westport, Ont.
May 5th to May 27th,	Fred Helleiner,	Swastika, Ont.
May 5th to May 27th,	Bill Gunn,	Toronto, Ont.
May 11th to May 13th,	Bill Wasserfall,	" "
May 12th to May 18th,	Frank Lovesy,	" "
May 12th to May 13th,	Marshall Field,	St. Thomas, Ont.
May 12th & May 13th,	Ruth Brown,	Toronto, Ont.
May 13th to May 31st,	Wishart Campbell,	" "
May 21st to May 24th,	Mike Porter,	" "
May 21st to May 24th,	Jim Woodford,	" "

CO-OPERATORS:

Ralph O'Reilly, Detroit, Mich.
 "Tiny" St. Clair, " "

etc.

RETURNS AND RECOVERIES:

Brown Thrasher, 502-84508, banded May 17, 1954, return May 11, 1955, return May 12/56
 Baltimore Oriole, 52-162108, banded May 28, 1955, found dead May 14, 1956, Lakeside, O.
 Yellow Warbler, 22-16349, banded May 11, 1955, return May 22, 1956.
 Yellow Warbler, 22-16481, banded May 17, 1955, return May 27, 1956.
 Yellow Warbler, 22-23040, banded May 26, 1955, return May 22, 1956.
 Catbird, 52-162095, banded May 25, 1955, return May 26, 1956.
 Black Capped Chickadee, 22-16187, banded April 22, 1955, return May 31, 1956.
 Barn Swallow, banded May 17, 1956, found dead June 11, Malan, Ohio.
 Bank Swallow, 22-35800, banded noon May 16, 1956, taken from cat and released
 Tillbury East Township at 2 p. m. May 16, 1956.

	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Total
Cardinal																4			1	1	1	2							10
Rose-Breasted Grosbeak										2																			2
Indigo Bunting			1					4	2	7	1				1	2	1	8	5		1	1	2	1	2				39
American Goldfinch								2	2	5								3	2	6	1	2		1	3				25
Eastern Towhee												1																	1
Savannah Sparrow							2		1																				4
Grasshopper Sparrow													1																1
Sharp-Tailed Sparrow																1													1
Slate-Coloured Junco			3	1			1	13	1	12																			5
Chipping Sparrow			1	2	1	2	1	13	1	2																			33
Clay-Coloured "										2																			2
Field Sparrow						1		2		2	1								2										8
White-Crowned Sparrow			2	2		6	3	16	29	42																			104
White-Throated "			7	5	7	2	3	11	13	28							1		1										76
Lincoln's Sparrow				2	4		5	3	4	1	1				2														23
Swamp Sparrow									1	1	1					1													3
Song Sparrow									3	1						1	1	1											8

Total Species Banded 102

Total Number Banded 2837

Trapping Days 28

POINT PELEE - MAY - BANDING TOTALS - 1956.BAND SERIES USED:

BROWN R.	22-34819	52-25608	52-172410	22-112919		543-00526
	-22-34829	-52-25612	-52-172415	-22-112946		
CAMPBELL W.	22-27878	52-26283	16-8407	22-110722	502-89307	523-71901 514-30901
	-22-27900	-52-26500	-16-8500	-22-110741	-502-89326	-523-71907
	22-36301	52-29101	17-4801			
	-22-36400	-52-29180	-17-4822			
	22-39101					
	-22-39358					
FIELD M.	22-17568	52-17096	52-157000	20-131684		
	-22-17578	-52-17100	-52-172101	-20-131688		
		52-08000	-52-172103			
		52-07901				
		-52-07912				
GUNN, W. W. H.	22-23059	52-14139	52-162120	22-107251	502-84551	523-63516
	-22-23100	-52-14261	-52-162154	-22-107264	-502-84553	-523-63518
	22-23201		52-162401			
	-22-23358		-52-162415			
KELLEY, N. T.	23-106347	53-194400	54-189601	23-72771	55-56054	
	-23-106354			-23-72780	-55556055	
	23-106404			23-72950	55-56076	
	-23-106406			-23-72963	-55-56077	
LOVESY, F.	22-35556	52-24874	52-172509	22-113040	502-91216	543-00002
	-22-36000	-52-25000	-52-172577	-22-113069	-502-91236	-543-00005
	22-38001	52-28001				
	-22-38022	-52-28180				
PORTER, M.	21-20801	51-4601	50-168507			503-97915
	-21-20833	-51-4653	-50-168526			-503-97917
STRONG, A.	22-36801	52-26701	52-155126	22-114001		
	-22-36900	-52-26744	-52-155128	-22-114015		
WASSERFALL	22-33020	52-12415	52-162560	22-107620	502-80253	523-63058
	-22-33200	-52-12460	-52-162580	-22-107738	-502-80256	

During a recent tour of North Africa, Europe and the British Isles, Dick Lovesy was able to visit the various banding and research stations that were in operation.

To familiarize members with stations overseas Dick is writing a short article on each. Following is "FAIR ISLE", a working example of what the O. B. B. A. is trying to do.

MY TRIP TO FAIR ISLE OBSERVATORY

- Richard Lovesy

In September of 1956 I had the good fortune to visit Fair Isle, prior to the Second World War, Fair Isle was the most isolated and least accessible Island in Britain lying in the North Atlantic, midway between Orkney and Shetland, 25 miles from each.

Dr. W. J. Egging, Conservation Officer, and Mr. George Waterson of the Nature Conservancy of Scotland supplied particulars regarding Fair Isle, so after a short trip by boat, I booked accommodation at the North Haven Hostel, the main landing-place, which was a group of well-constructed buildings of timber formerly occupied by the Royal Navy. Food and lodging cost about \$19.00 per week.

Fair Isle was well known to ornithologists through the work of Dr. W. E. Clarke as a place where, perhaps more than anywhere else in Great Britain, great concentrations of migratory birds occur in Spring and Fall.

Was it possible to develop a migration research station at Fair Isle conducted on scientific lines? - - This was a dream hoped for by Mr. George Waterson while a prisoner of war in a German prison camp. He discussed his plan with a fellow countryman, Ian Pitman, also a prisoner of war, and after repatriation the plans were presented to the Chairman of the Scottish Ornithologist Club, financial assistance was obtained which enabled George Waterson, now Laird of Fair Isle, to see his dream attain reality in 1948.

Since that time a wealth of scientific information has been gathered on bird migration by banding and general observation; possibly banding has contributed the greater information. Fair Isle rates high in banding technique, all birds trapped are weighed, plumage studied, sexed, examined for parasites and parasites collected. Birds which are found dead or injured as a result of striking telephone wires or lighthouse lanterns are collected and the skins prepared at the laboratory.

Some of the methods used for trapping birds are the Helligoland trap, Gully trap, Dyke trap, Roadside trap, Potter trap, clap nets, these are possibly the more common methods.

Although not so numerous at Fair Isle as at Point Pelee, the rare species of birds trapped and banded there is very interesting. Frequently foreign birds find their way to Fair Isle and the behaviour of migrant birds on the Island is of great interest and as observations accumulate they will throw valuable light on some of the problems, habitat-selections and bird psychology.