

"Bird Banding Near Fairfield During

1936-1937"

Wesley H. Bartlett

Iowa Ornithologists Union

Cedar Falls, Iowa

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BIRD BANDING NEAR FAIRFIELD

DURING 1936-1937

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Along with other problems of the ornithologist we must not neglect looking at one of the phases of work with bird life which is and in the time to come will doubtless aid greatly in the solving of these mysteries--namely the work of bird banding.

During the past winter the ground was completely covered with ice for a period of several weeks. Almost two months of banding time was lost as the traps were so firm in the ice that they could not be loosened without damage to them. The winter months probably would not have added a great many more individuals banded, but would have given many interesting results. The banders record must suffer the weather conditions along with other activities.

Laying aside all alibies and in comparison to other years' records this past year has been very successful in banding activities.^[1] A total of 937 individuals have been banded this banding year, most of which were taken from September to May 5th. Seven had been captured during the summer while fledglings. Twenty eight species have

[1] See "Comparative Chart of Bird Banding Activities of Parsons College, Fairfield, Iowa". - Chart I attached to this paper.

been banded during this period.

The Slate-colored Junco leads the species in individuals for this year with a total of 312 entering upon the records. The chimney swift banding resulted in 251 birds being taken which had not previously been banded. Lack of time necessitated letting about 500 individuals go unbanded, which were in the chimney at the time of the banding. The Bob-white catches resulted in fifty six individuals banded here since opening the station six years ago at 5377. Sixty-five species have been banded, of which four were added this year--namely Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Grinnell's Water Thrush and Goldfinch, American Bittern.

On October 30, 1936 a Prairie Falcon was found hanging on a fence near the scene of the traps. It is thought that the bird had been by a hunter, and left on the fence. The Prairie Falcon is unusual in this section around Fairfield and was an interesting observation. Not long ago a barred owl was found in much the same condition. A few smaller birds have been found near the station, killed by hunters. The problem of educating the ruthless hunter and the mischievous boy seems to be a big one. On one visit to the station last winter three dead Bob-whites were found on top of one of the traps. Two of them were banded, while the other was unbanded. From all

appearances the birds had been taken from the traps and killed, probably by a hunter, and left there with the intention of getting them on the homeward trip. Although hunting is prohibited in the area of the station it seems difficult to completely shut out the hunter. One of the problems of the ornithologist is to educate people of this type. As we look back and think what unlimited shooting of the passenger pigeon and Prairie chicken resulted in, we will fully realize the responsibility resting on our shoulders. Twelve banded individuals met death during the year, most of the fatalities occurring during early and late winter. The Bob-whites numbered three, while the Cardinal, White-breasted Nuthatch and Bluejay each numbered two, and Junco, Brown Thrasher and White-throated Sparrow one each. The chief cause of death of the birds was due to attacks by small mammals and cats. The problem of providing protection for the birds is a great one, and calls for continual effort to keep the area free from cats and other harmful mammals. Weather conditions during the winter months often cause fatalities unless the traps are readily taken care of, and even then often times some birds freeze or starve to death. Certain birds are harmful to others in the territory of a banding station. Shrikes, owls, hawks and such species occasionally cause death of some birds but we must consider very care fully and be ab-

olutely sure that they are doing actual harm before we attempt to kill them. As a whole they are not harmful in the local station.

One phase of banding work which creates great interest is that of receiving returns from previous bandings. The chimney Swift banding netted returns of six individuals banded in 1933 and seven banded in 1934. They had all been banded at Fairfield. Three each of White-breasted Nuthatches and Blue Jays returned, while two Robins and Brown Thrashers returned. One Bob-white returned and was found dead. The returns totaled twenty four for the year, with six species making the trip back after the previous season's bandings.

The return of a Brown Thrasher that had been banded in 1934 was of much interest. The band was worn so thin that it was nearly off the bird. Whether it was caused by some outside factor or whether that individual, or even species, has a tendency to wear the band away more is not known, but previous reports of similar happenings with the Brown Thrasher would lead one to believe that the Brown Thrasher inhabits places that tend to wear away the band. The rubbing of the band on shrubs, trees, and on the leg of the bird itself seem to cause great wear.

The length of the birds' stay in the area may be determined to some extent by their repeating. ^[2] Not all individuals repeat, but many do which gives a satisfactory basis for conclusions; although we must remember that

[2] See "Banding Activities Summary for 1936-1937 at Parsons College, Fairfield, Iowa" - Chart II

banded birds are individuals and should be studied as such. Many must be observed in order to draw conclusions of a species.

The total summary of the station's work for the current banding year may best be shown by a chart. [3]

The daily record for the station was broken March 25 when a total of 43 were banded and 15 repeated making the days catch total 58 individuals. Of the 43 that were banded 37 were Juncos, 4 Song Sparrows and one each of Fox Sparrows and Harris Sparrow.

At present there are 10 traps of four types in operation. Five are tray funnel traps, two are false bottom, two Government Sparrow traps and one Cohasset Warbler trap. The Baldwin Woodpecker trap is very good but is not in operation at present. In season the Chimney Swift trap is put in operation.

[3] See "Banding Activities Summary for 1936-1937 at Parsons College, Fairfield, Iowa" - Chart II

Since the data accompanying this paper was compiled on April 25 the banding has brought excellent results. An addition of 52 White-throat Sparrows, 6 Brown Thrashers, 4 Cowbirds, one each of American Bittern and Rose-breasted Grosbeak has been made. The banding of the American Bittern added another species to the stations total as well as making the years total 23 species. Of these 64 individuals banded in this period of April 25 to May 5 thirty-seven were banded on May 4. Eleven repeats were also recorded on this date making another day with excellent results. The years total including May 5 is 937. The stations total is changed by the addition of the same number of individuals to reach 5377 individuals.

Chart I

Comparative Chart of Bird Banding Activities of
Parsons College, Fairfield, Ia. Jan. 1931 to Apr.
1937. (A year's record is kept from June to June)

	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	Total
	-31	-32	-33	-34	-35	-36	-37	
Junco, Slate-colored	56	67	104	157	160	156	312	1012
Sparrow, White Throat	19	2	51	32	93	227	28	457
Blue Jay	13	5	12	13	75	74	24	216
Sparrow, Tree	13	5		3	3		4	28
Sparrow, Song	12	1	2	13	42	12	16	98
Cardinal	9	8	2	2	14	6	28	69
Chickadee, Black-capped	6	6	1	5		2	3	23
Sparrow, Fox	5	2	12	13	34	28	47	141
Thrasher, Brown	4	1	38	17	24	21	35	140
Woodpecker, Downy	4			10	1	1		16
Owl, Great Horned	2							2
Nuthatch, White-breasted	2	3	4	4	3	3	7	26
Titmouse, Tufted	2	6	3	3	6	9	6	35
Meadowlark, Eastern	1							1
Woodpecker, Red Bellied	1			1	2			4
Woodpecker, Hairy	1			1				2
Coat, American	1			1	2	1		5
Towhee, Red-eyed		2	9		1	1	2	15
Cowbird		1	10		14	1		26
Flicker, Northern		1			2	4		7
Swift, Chimney			1001	1231	4	1	251	2488
Catbird			9	9	6	2	3	29
Sparrow, Lincoln			5	4	2	5	2	18

	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	Total
	-31	-32	-33	-34	-35	-36	-37	
Yellowthroat, Maryland			4					4
Grackle, Bronzed			3	5	6	26	11	51
Sparrow, Harris			3	4	6	2	6	21
Thrush, Wood			2				1	3
Owl, Screech			2		1			3
Sparrow, Grasshopper			2					2
Sparrow, Chipping			2	3		1		6
Kinglet, Golden-crowned			2			1		3
Phoebe			1					1
Wren, House			1	30	7	2	5	45
Ovenbird			1		1	1		3
Cuckoo, Yellow-billed			1					1
Bluebird			1	10	5	1		17
Robin			1	7	4	10	1	23
Sparrow, White-crowned			1	1	1	3		6
Dove, Mourning			1	9	4			14
Crow			1					1
Owl, Barred			1					1
Bob-white				18	59	13	56	146
Blackbird, Red-wing				15		1		16
Swallow, Barn				14	8			22
Shrike, Migrant				3			1	4
Oriole, Baltimore				3				3
Hawk, Red-tailed				2				2
Thrush, Hermit				1			1	2
Sparrow, Field				1				1

	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	Total				
	-31	-32	-33	-34	-35	-36	-37					
Sparrow, Field				1				1				
Starling				1				1				
Woodpecker, Red-headed				1		2		3				
Grosbeak, Rose-breasted					2	8	1	11				
Hawk, Sparrow						3		3				
Warbler, Magnolia					1			1				
Killdeer					1			1				
Cormorant, Double-crested					1			1				
Sandpiper, Spotted					6			6				
Warbler, Myrtle					2			2				
Waxwing, Cedar						1		1				
Vireo, Philadelphia						1		1				
Wren, Winter						1		1				
Kinglet, Ruby-crowned							3	3				
Water-thrush, Grinnells							1	1				
Goldfinch							1	1				
Year's Totals					151	110	1293	1647	608	631	856	5296

Chart II

Banding Activities Summary for 1936-37
at Parsons College, Fairfield, Iowa.

	Indiv. Banded	Repeats		Rets.	Dead		Escaped
		No. of Indiv.	No. Rpts.		Banded	Unbanded	
Junco, Slate-colored	312	81	227			1	10
Swift, Chimney	251			13			
Bob-white	56	38	186	1	3	3	
Sparrow, Fox	47	18	45				
Thrasher, Brown	35	11	28	2	1		
Sparrow, White-throated	28	8	15		1		
Cardinal	28	16	62		2		
Blue Jay	24	12	51	3	2	1	
Sparrow, Song	16	6	10				
Grackle, Bronzed	11	1	1			1	
Nuthatch, White-breasted	7	3	10	3	2	1	1
Titmouse, Tufted	6	4	29				
Sparrow, Harris	6	2	15				
Wren, House	5					1	
Sparrow, Tree	4	1	1				
Chickadee, Black Capped	3						
Catbird	3						
Kinglet, Ruby-crowned	3						
Sparrow, Lincoln	2						
Towhee, Red-eyed	2	1	5				
Robin	1			2			
Shrike, Migrant	1						
Thrush, Hermit	1						

	Indiv. Banded	Repeats No. Ind.	No. Rpt.	Rets.	Dead Banded	Unband.	Escaped
Thrush, Wood	1						
Grosbeak, Rose-breasted	1						
Thrush, Grinnell's Water	1						
Goldfinch	1						
Prairie Falcon						1	
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Totals	856	202	685	24	11	9	11

Squirrel	2
Chipmunk	7
Opossum	8
Cottontail	1