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# THE

MONTHLY



# GULL

BULLETIN

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**AUGUST MEETING:** The next regular meeting of the Association will be held on Thursday evening, 9th inst., at eight o'clock, in the Assembly Hall of the Public Library, corner of McAllister and Larkin Streets. Take elevator to third floor. Car lines No. 5 or No. 19.

Members or others who have enjoyed any experiences in hunting or observing birds during the vacation season are urged to contribute to the mutual pleasure by descriptions of the same, with any photographs they may have been able to secure.

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**AUGUST FIELD TRIP** will be taken on Sunday, August 12th, to Point Bonita. This trip is one of the most delightful enjoyed by the Association. At the lighthouse several species of water bird are always to be observed and off-shore birds are often encountered. Take Sausalito Ferry, 8:15 a. m. Purchase round-trip tickets to Sausalito. Bring lunch and canteens.

Route will be over the shore road to Fort Baker and Battery Spencer and thence by trail overlooking the ocean to Fort Barry and Rodeo Lagoon, where lunch will be eaten. Thence to the lighthouse and returning via road and tunnel to Sausalito, a distance of about six miles each way. Those who desire may ride either way in motor bus.

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## BIRD BANDING

The bird-banding movement noted in the GULL for March, 1922, is experiencing a healthy and fruitful development. The American Bird Banding Association was formed in New York in 1909 and its work was carried on under the auspices of the Linnean Society of that city from 1911 to 1920, when it was formally taken over by the U. S. Biological Survey, which has been conducting banding operations for many years. This Bureau is the natural depository and clearing house for records for all such operations. Permits are issued from the Bureau, bands and record forms are furnished by it, together with detailed instructions and suggestions and notes of the experiences and results attained by associations and individual banders.

Mr. S. Prentiss Baldwin has continued his excellent work, begun in Cleveland in 1914 and in Thomasville, Georgia, in 1915. Early in 1922, the New England Bird Banding Association was organized in Boston and has since been very active. In October, 1922, the Inland B. B. Association was formed in Chicago, with Mr. Baldwin as its president, with the object of systematically organizing and conducting such work throughout the great Mississippi Valley flyway and adjacent territory. The Linnean Society has renewed operations and the Delaware Valley (Penna.) Ornithological Club is preparing to take an active part in the work.

On the Pacific Coast, the Cooper Ornithological Club, with Mr. J. Eugene Law in charge of organization, is enlisting competent and interested bird students and lovers, as noted in the GULL for June, 1923.

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The benefits of this work increase in geometric ratio with the number of active workers and are in a measure affected by the distribution of the participants with reference to lines of migration, but there are innumerable problems which can be worked out by each individual, irrespective of others. The qualifications and requirements are simple; the expense, small; the work, easy, useful and intensely interesting.

Interested bird observers who feel diffident will appreciate the following account of "Bird Banding with Small Equipment" by a beginner, Mrs. Elizabeth A. Herrick, in a paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the New England B. B. Association in January last, as reported by the Biological Survey:

"Early in 1922 I joined the New England Bird Banding Association, persuaded that the work would be worth while if I could report only one bird banded at the end of the season. I felt quite sure I never should be able to band a single bird. How was I to get the birds in the first place, and if such an unlikely thing did happen, how was I to attach the bands? It seemed utterly impossible, as I had no trap and knew I could not have one of the Government traps; but, on talking with my brother-in-law about the matter, he offered to make a trap in which he felt sure I could catch some birds."

(Here follows a description of the construction and operation of an automatic trap made from a brass wire bird cage only eight inches wide and ten inches high.)

"March 14, 1922, at 10 a. m. the trap was placed on a small platform, 12 by 24 inches, on the roof of the piazza, one story from the ground, just outside of a bedroom window, and baited with sunflower and hemp seed. I think I should say here that I have been feeding a great many birds on that same small platform for several years, so, of course, I felt sure that birds would come there, but I did not feel at all sure they would go into and spring the trap.

"At 3:30 p. m. of the same day, I had occasion to go to the room with no thought of the trap in my mind. Imagine my surprise when upon glancing at it I found a male evening grosbeak imprisoned. That I was excited goes without saying, and I wondered if I could take him out of the trap and attach the band without injuring him. It seemed a most difficult thing to do, but I was determined to try, with the result that I found it much easier than I expected. The bird behaved very well and made me no trouble whatever, and he is now No. 16985.

"The next day I banded two more and the following day three more and I kept on until I had banded 35 evening grosbeaks! One day No. 17979 repeated and I found that the bird had been able to pinch the band with its powerful beak, so I readjusted it. This was due to the band's being made of too thin aluminum, and I am glad to say the new ones coming to me now are being made of the needed thickness.

"I had large numbers of these birds come to my trap every day and hour, and often counted 23 at the same time. On one occasion two were trapped at once and several times I had three in the trap. Sometimes the grosbeaks would go in and out of the trap without springing it and smaller birds used occasionally to do the same thing, so I attached a strong thread to the perch and brought it through the window into the room where I could spring the trap at will.

"During the nesting season, instead of setting the trap, I attached a thread to the small door (see cut), which has a spring strong enough to close it when the thread is released from within the house, and I found that the birds would go in as readily as they did the other way. I have had birds so eager to enter that they would go around the other side if this door was closed, trying to

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find an entrance, and more than once I have gently pulled the door open in front of them and they would calmly hop around and go in.

"I banded one fox sparrow, and from April 15 to August 27 I banded 86 purple finches. I also banded song and chipping sparrows. Purple finch No. 26387 was banded April 19, 1922. While I had my hand around him in the trap, with fingers apart, ready to slip over his head, he deliberately picked up a sunflower seed and cracked and devoured it with my hand still around him.

"No. 29644, a male purple finch, went into and sprung the trap May 17, 1922. I found him perched upon the wire loop, singing his heart out, regardless of the fact that he was a prisoner.

"From March 14 to September 13 I banded 144 adult birds and had 118 repeats, not counting a number of grosbeaks that I took from the trap and didn't band—not such a bad record for a beginner and one small canary-cage trap!"

The Biological Survey also quotes a letter from Dr. R. D. Book, of Corning, Ohio, on the subject of "Baits for Bird Traps." The author refers to the liking of birds for crisp pie crust, and tells of his experience with a female titmouse:

"Her mate was in the habit of alighting on my hand for pie crust. All the time she was incubating she was crazy for it. She would leave the nest when I approached and never cease her cries until the male would come and get the food and carry it to her. This he would always do before he would return and procure some for himself. But the strange part is this, that after the birds were hatched, the mother bird would not touch the pie crust. Never afterward, to my knowledge, could she be induced to take it. One day he tried it time and again, but she treated his efforts with utter indifference. Finally, she was picking under a small bush and he flew with a piece of crust to the bush and gently dropped it through the leaves just in front of her. The female bird paid not the least attention to this, went on picking at the ground and presently flew off, to the apparent chagrin of her mate."

This is paralleled, in a way, by the writer's experience with California towhees in Berkeley. In 1922, as soon as she had brought off her young, a mother bird apparently started them in life on suet from his feed table. Back and forth she would go, almost voraciously filling her mouth with suet and returning soon for another load, occasionally stopping to eat a little before going to her offspring. Now in 1923, another brood has been raised, but the towhees have not been seen at the suet, which has lain, practically untouched, for nearly two months in the same place as last year.

Birds frequently exhibit something very like caprice in the matter of food. A friend finds apples very popular with several species, but the writer has not had this experience. The hermit thrush eats them sparingly and when the English sparrows see him doing so, they commence to compete. But when the thrush is not here an apple will wilt and dry up without so much as a scratch from a bird bill. Experiments with baits form a fascinating phase of bird banding, but explanations are often difficult to obtain, as we humans are able to observe only one end of the story. We can know but little of what food is obtained elsewhere than at our tables or traps. Again, it may be that the proximity of a bird bath to the table has some modifying effect upon the birds' appetites.

A. S. KIBBE.

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**AUDUBON WARBLERS AGAIN AT ROCK SPRING:** Indications that these warblers may be breeding hereabouts are accumulating. A male in full plumage was again found, on July 22d, a short distance westwardly from the spring, near the commencement of the trail along the Bolinas Ridge. The female Audubon was not discovered in the time available, but persistence may bring its reward, for April 15th is a late date for these birds, normally, in Berkeley. The place was fairly swarming with other birds, of which many were young. Trees, brush and grass each held their devotees.



**JULY FIELD TRIP** was taken on Sunday, the 15th, starting in the Claremont Hotel grounds, Berkeley. This attractive habitat furnished its usual quota of species and the old road was then followed to the summit. Lunch was eaten on the trail returning along the ridge between Claremont and Strawberry Canyons and the party then sought the location favored by the Bell Sparrow. After a brief waiting spell, the whole family put in its appearance, two adults and two young displaying themselves to the full satisfaction of everyone in the party.

The return was continued along the ridge and down to the stadium, the party dispersing at the corner of College Avenue and Bancroft Way. Birds encountered were: California quail, western red-tailed hawk, red-shafted flicker, Anna and Allen hummers; olive-sided and western flycatchers, California jay, purple finch, and green-backed goldfinch; Nuttall, western chipping, Bell and song sparrows, San Francisco and California towhees; black-headed grosbeak, lazuli bunting, yellow, Tolmie and pileolated warblers; Vigors wren, bush and wren-tits, russet-backed thrush and robin. Twenty-six species.

Members in attendance were: Miss Schroder, Mrs. Parry, Mr. and Mrs. Kibbe, Mr. Elmore, Ananda and Henri Eric Jacobs. As guests: Dr. Goodman and Mr. Parry. Seven members and two guests.

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## AUDUBON ASSOCIATION OF THE PACIFIC

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