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Screech Owl hunting during daylight

Jeffrey A. Spendlow

On 28 May 1978 at 0800 EDT, about 3 hours after sunrise on a bright, sunny day, I caught and banded (675-22101) a Screech Owl (*Otus asio*) at the Gedney Brook Sanctuary, in Chappaqua, Westchester County, New York. The owl was caught in a mist net (18B) about 0.5 meters from a female Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*). In an adjacent net (18C), about 3 meters to the other side of the owl, was a recently killed male tanager. The exact order in which the three birds were caught could not be determined, but apparently the owl had killed the male tanager and was attempting to kill the female when it became entangled. Prescott (*Bird-Banding* 43:143, 1972) reported observing a Screech Owl killing netted birds at twilight.

A pair of Screech Owls has nested for several years in a tree about 50 meters east of the series 18 nets. Both birds were banded in 1975 and recaptured in 1976 and 1977. One bird was caught

twice in the series 18 nets and, on 14 May 1978, a dead Star-nosed Mole (*Condylura cristata*) was found in the top pocket of net 18C at 1530 EDT. All 9 captures for 1975-1977 occurred either before 0600 or after 2000 EDT.

The pair of owls that nested in 1978 did so in a tree about 30 meters to the north of the series 18 nets and these nets were easily visible from the nest hole. Since Screech Owls are not normally found hunting this late after sunrise and since the nets had been checked and emptied several times earlier in the morning, it is most likely that the owl was attracted by the sight and sound of one of the captured tanagers. Presumably the owl had one or more hungry, almost-full-grown nestlings to feed and this may have been what prompted it to attack the tanagers in broad daylight.

Peabody Museum of Natural History, Yale University, New Haven, CT 06520.

A recapture of an old Hooded Warbler

Jeffrey A. Spendlow

On 8 September 1970 I banded (122-74243) a male Hooded Warbler (*Wilsonia citrina*) of unknown age at Gedney Brook Sanctuary, Chappaqua, Westchester Co., New York. When I recaptured this bird on 13 May 1978, it was at least 7 years and 11 months old, thereby exceeding the maximum age known for this species (Clapp, pers. comm.).

This bird was also recaptured 2 June and 3 September 1971, 24 September 1972, and 10 and 18 May 1975. All captures through 1975 were made in one of 5 net sites (17A-E) located in the southern corner of the sanctuary.

Six other males of this species were caught during this time period, but none were ever recaptured. In 1976 and 1977 male 122-74243 was not caught, but another male was caught and banded (1370-01349) on 14 May 1976 in a net located about 100 meters north of the series 17 nets. Bird 1370-01349 was

later recaptured 22 May 1976, 28 May 1977, and 5 June 1977 in the series 17 nets. Both birds were recaptured about an hour apart on 13 May 1978. Bird 1370-01349 was found in net 17D and 122-74243 in a net about 500 m to the north. This other net site was not used in 1976 and used only once in 1977, so the older male may have resided in that area both years without having been caught.

The evidence suggests that 122-74243 had been displaced as a result of competition with the younger bird. An alternative explanation is that the older bird moved to a better territory and that the new bird took over the vacated one. This latter is not thought to be the case since 122-74243 was the only territory-holding male Hooded Warbler resident in the sanctuary until the arrival of the second bird.

Peabody Museum of Natural History, Yale University, New Haven, CT 06520.

Abnormal maxilla in a Tufted Titmouse: Probable cause and growth

Harry E. Slack III

While many observations have been made of bill abnormalities in wild birds, information regarding the cause and subsequent growth is often unknown. I had the opportunity to make such observations of an Eastern Tufted Titmouse (*Parus bicolor*) during banding operations at Huntington, West Virginia, from autumn 1976 to spring 1977.

No bill abnormalities were present when the titmouse (AHY) was banded (1191-69876) and measured (Table 1) on 2 November 1976 and recaptured on 20 November 1976. When the bird was recaptured on 11 February 1977, the right side of the mandible was completely severed at the base, and a portion was missing. Considerable bleeding was also noted. The maxilla had increased 1.19 mm in length and was slightly decurved at the tip. At final recapture on 8 April 1977, although the tip had broken off, the maxilla had increased 0.40 mm in length. There was no further damage to the mandible and the bleeding had stopped.

Roberts (1955, A manual for the identification of birds of Minnesota and neighboring states, p. 644) gives the maxilla length of the Tufted Titmouse as ranging from 0.44 — 0.49 inches [11.18 — 12.44 mm]. My measurements (AHY) show a maxilla range of 12.30 — 13.10 mm ($n = 15$). Pomeroy (1962, *British Birds* 55:57-61) considered bill abnormality, as the result of an accident, to occur only rarely in wild birds, and where definite information is available, overgrowth and downcurving of the maxilla was associated with mandible damage.

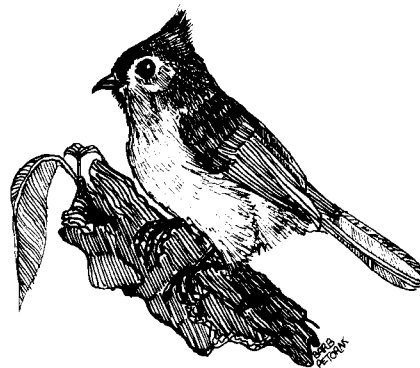
Table 1. Maxilla measurements

Date captured	Maxilla length (mm)	Increase (%)
2 November 1976	12.30	--
20 November 1976	12.70	3.2
11 February 1977	13.89	12.9
8 April 1977	14.29 ¹	16.2

¹Tip of maxilla broken off.

It seems likely that the damage to the mandible of this titmouse was a result of an accident which occurred after 20 November 1976; and the subsequent increase in maxilla length, beyond the above-mentioned ranges, was the direct result of the mandible damage.

1316 Huntington Ave., Huntington, WV 25701.



A synopsis

Merrill Wood

In 1940-1978 I banded 34,959 birds (122 species), which are not remarkable numbers at State College, Pennsylvania. The results might be useful for other banders to determine if they are doing as well or better.

Encounters were 6257 (17.89%), repeats 4854 (13.88%), returns 1011 (2.89%), and recoveries 783 (2.23%). The encounters are not the addition of repeats, returns, and recoveries, since some encounters were two or three of these. The recoveries in State College (outside my Station) were 539 (1.53%), and recoveries outside State College were 244 (0.69). Foreign birds (banded by other banders) caught in my Station were 59 (46 were banded by four other State College banders), and 13 were banded elsewhere (in Florida, Maryland, Missouri, New York, and Pennsylvania).

While these percentages seem low for the effort, the bander never knows when he or she will be lucky.

811 North Allen St., State College, PA 16801.

New leader named for Forest Service research on native California wildlife

Dr. Jared Verner of Fresno, California, is now in charge of the U.S. Forest Service's research on sensitive, endangered, and threatened wildlife species in California. In this position, he will lead a team of researchers and technicians at the Forest Service's Pacific Southwest Forest and Range Experiment Station, 1130 "O" Street in Fresno. He has been interim leader of the group for the past year.

According to Verner, the research team's current concerns are to determine the environmental requirements of such species as the California Condor, Southern Bald Eagle, American Peregrine Falcon, and Blunt-nosed Leopard Lizard. Other top-priority assignments include determining how logging, grazing, and related wildland uses affect native wildlife, and continuing the Experiment Station's efforts to improve the health and the size of the North Kings Deer Herd in the central Sierra Nevada.

Verner has been with the Experiment Station's Fresno office since 1976. He was formerly a professor of ecology at Illinois State University and professor of biology at Central Washington State University. He holds a bachelor's degree in wildlife management from Washington State University, a master's in zoology from Louisiana State University, and a doctorate in zoology from the University of Washington. His post-doctoral studies at the University of California, Berkeley, were in the field of animal behavior.

Verner is a Fellow of the American Ornithologist's Union, an honor given in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the study of American birdlife. He is a member of W.B.B.A. and also of the scholastic honorary societies Phi Sigma, Phi Kappa Phi, Phi Beta Kappa, and Sigma Xi. During his career, he has received four consecutive National Science Foundation grants for his research and has authored or coauthored more than 30 scientific and technical publications, most of which are about the behavior and ecology of North American songbirds.

Call for entries . . .

The Third Annual International Wildlife Film Festival

To encourage the production of high quality wildlife films, the University of Montana Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society sponsored the First and Second Annual International Wildlife Film Festivals. Participation was very encouraging.

In 1980, the Chapter will host the Third Annual International Wildlife Film Festival. Amateur and professional films pertaining to wildlife will be judged by a panel of highly qualified film makers and biologists. Winning entries will receive awards, and the results will be publicized internationally.

The deadline for submission of applications and films is 1 February 1980. All entries must have a predominantly wildlife theme and have been produced or released in calendar year 1979. Judging will be held prior to the Festival, and the winning films will be shown in early spring at the University of Montana.

Information, rules of eligibility, and application forms will be available 1 October by writing: Wildlife Film Festival, Wildlife Biology Program, University of Montana, Missoula, MT 59812. Phone: (406) 243-5272.

Change of address problems

The Circulation Managers of both E.B.B.A. and W.B.B.A. have requested that we emphasize to all members the need for prompt notification of address change. Each time the Postal Service must send a change of address to the Circulation Manager, there is a charge of 25 cents plus the loss of a journal, at \$1.00 plus. In all fairness to every one in each organization, please send address changes as quickly as feasible to the Circulation Manager. For E.B.B.A.: Ruth Rose, 98 Lopez Rd., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. For W.B.B.A.: Shirley Spittler, 3975 N. Pontatoc Rd., Tucson, AZ 85718.

The Editors



Logo sketch by Barb Petorak

Vulture Vibes

The first of these columns dealt with the problem of color wing-tag protocol for vultures. The response to this has been poor. Since that column was written, two birds with blue wing-tags have been spotted in the Northeast. The blue wing-tags are being used by Sheila Gaby of Miami, Florida. One bird has been seen at a roost near Hawk Mountain, Pennsylvania, by Alex Nagy, and the

other was spotted at a roost in Stanhope, New Jersey, by Ed Henckel. The fact that birds from Florida are in the Northeast in the spring stresses the importance of the protocol. We are fortunate in knowing that Sheila is using the blue tags, but what if someone else were also using blue? How would we know exactly where these birds were coming from? So, if you are wing-tagging vultures, please get in touch with Ed Henckel, Camp Allamuchy, R.D. #3, Stanhope, NJ 07874, and advise him of the color you are using.

Where have all the vultures gone? The vultures in our roost in Stanhope, NJ seem to have temporarily disappeared. They had returned in late February and early March and were here until the end of May. We had the opportunity to wing-tag only five birds. Their disappearance is quite a mystery. There are approximately 80 birds in the roost, and this has dwindled down to 4 birds. We believe that these 4 are nesting in the area. Is it possible that these birds roost here for the spring and then move farther north as summer approaches? If anyone has had similar happenings with their roosts, please let us know.

Anyone who has anything which may be of interest to vulture banders — problems encountered, strange happenings, or anything that may help our vulture research — please submit to: Nancy L. Karner, 126 Pennsylvania Ave., Bangor, PA 18012.

Symposium on estimating populations of terrestrial birds

A symposium will be held 27-30 October 1980 at the Asilomar Conference Grounds near Monterey, California to bring together biologists and statisticians interested in estimating bird populations in terrestrial communities. Expected to sponsor the symposium are the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Forest Service, as well as other agencies and organizations.

The symposium will focus on: (1) the methods of estimating populations (both absolute and relative measures of density); (2) design of censuses and sampling; (3) data collection and analysis; (4)

assumptions and biases; and (5) special problems of species groups.

Additionally, a series of overview papers will assess the validity and applicability of various census methods in areas of current active research. Interchange of ideas will be facilitated by invited and voluntary papers, poster sessions, and field trips. The proceedings of the symposium will be published promptly.

The members of the organizing committee are: John T. Emlen, Joseph Hickey, Cameron Kepler, C.J. Ralph, Fred Ramsey, Harry Recher, Chandler S. Robbins, J. Michael Scott, Jared Verner, and John A. Wiens. For further information contact the co-chairmen, Drs. Ralph or Scott at: Bird Census Symposium, P.O. Box 43, Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, Hawaii 96718.