

1989

Eastern Regional News

North American Bird Bander

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Recommended Citation

North American Bird Bander (1989) "Eastern Regional News," *North American Bird Bander*. Vol. 14 : Iss. 1 , Article 9.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/nabb/vol14/iss1/9>

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Eastern Regional News

Eastern Bird Banding Association

Founded 1923

President's Message

It is with regret that I must inform you of the loss of two of EBBA's most loyal and ardent supporters. Both Ruth Rose and Dorothy Mendinhall passed away during 1988. Their enthusiasm and dedication will be sorely missed.

Our editor, Robert Pantle, has asked that I remind you that he is always in need of manuscripts for NABB. Articles are needed for the paper section in the front of the journal and for EBBA's regional section. Let's not forget about our obligation to print the results of our studies as the busy seasons of spring and summer creep up on us.

An organization as large and complex as EBBA would be hard pressed to stay solvent if it weren't for the work of our dedicated treasurer. Don Mease has for many years handled the thankless tasks of membership renewals, balancing the books, paying EBBA's bills, keeping financial tabs on NABB expenditures, handling the Memorial Grant Fund, and the many other jobs involved in keeping EBBA in the black. I would like to thank him for a job well done. Keep up the good work, Don; EBBA needs you.

By the time this issue is in print, the time for our annual meeting will be upon us. I look forward to seeing all of you there.

Judith Bell
President



EBBA 1989 Meeting to be Held at Cape May

April 28-30, 1989

Mark your calendar and plan to attend this meeting at one of Eastern North America's premier birding spots.

The meeting will be held at the Grand Hotel and will feature papers, workshops, book sales, birding, more birding, equipment displays, and speakers on the area's unique ornithology.

Come and bring your banding questions with you.



Ruth Jane Rose

EBBA Honorary Member

1922-1988

The Eastern Bird Banding Association lost a loyal member and close friend with the death of Ruth Rose. Ruth was circulation manager of EBBA from 1962-1980. She began her affiliation with EBBA under Editor Frank Frazier, Sr. and at a time when six issues were mailed per year with a membership of 300.

Ruth will be remembered for her "designer" shoe box file index which she faithfully brought to the registration desk at annual meetings. Ruth took particular interest in new young banders, amending their file cards as they progressed from high school, to college, and on to graduate studies and EBBA offices.

Born in Seattle, Washington, she attended school and college in Glendale, California. She was active as an adult leader in Girl and Boy Scouts.

Ruth and her husband, Chris, served as volunteers-in-parks at Sandy Hook, New Jersey. In field studies, their work established the ethic and techniques for resource management at the park unit.

Ruth was a quiet person with a warm heart and sound advice, when she was asked to give it. In addition to her husband, she is survived by her daughter, Karen, and son, Chris, Jr. EBBA'S Officers and Councillors offer their sincere condolences to the family.



Dorothy Mendinhall

EBBA Honorary Member

1898-1988

Among Dorothy A. Mendinhall's varied career in many civic activities, she was an honorary member of the Eastern Bird Banding Association which she joined over 30 years ago.

Her home, Damsite, was a wildlife sanctuary and bird banding station, established in the 1950's. She shared her experience and knowledge through bird banding demonstrations and lectures.

It is documented that 78,000 individual birds representing various species have been banded during the past 30 years on her property. She was recognized by Maryland Governor Harry Hughes in 1980 and the Eastern Bird Banding and Northeastern Bird Banding associations in 1975 for contributions to bird banding.

She was a charter member of the local chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society and served as the state organization's first president and trustee. She helped organize the first waterfowl carving show on the Eastern Shore.

The many members of EBBA who knew and loved her will miss seeing her and swapping bird stories with her at the annual meetings. Dorothy is survived by her daughter, Dorothea, three grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Our sincere sympathy to her family.

Tips on Banding American Kestrels in Nearly Complete Pet Food Stores with Drop Ceiling Infrastructures

The Problem

As banders who live in southwestern Ohio, a region of our country where wooded margins and farm land are rapidly being consumed by expansive urbanization, we see ever increasing conflicts arising between nature and man. Banders often seem most qualified to solve these conflicts when avian species are involved.

As we were opening our mist nets for another routine session of banding at about 1300 on Sunday, December 6, 1987, we received word from a friend that a "Sparrow Hawk" had been discovered earlier in the day flying about inside a local pet food store that was nearing completion. The bird had evidently flown through an open rear delivery door, near dusk the night before, looking for a place to roost. Unfortunately for the store manager, the drop ceiling had not yet been completely installed, creating a veritable maze of steel beam, wire, and girder habitat for a rather confused American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*).

The manager knew of our banding experience and wondered if we could please come assess the situation for him. Anticipating a potentially unique experience and hoping to prevent the Kestrel from becoming yet another avian mortality statistic, we closed up our mist nets and headed out with our banding gear.

After spending three long hours on behalf of this unfortunate bird, we feel compelled to offer the following hints as we are certain that fellow banders will, sooner or later, find themselves confronted with similar circumstances. Accordingly, we offer the following simple steps for removing and banding American Kestrels displaced in nearly complete pet food stores with drop ceiling infrastructures.

Step 1: Locate the Subject

Send out "spotters" in an attempt to locate the victim. Fan-shaped deployments seem to work well initially, but this generally regresses fairly quickly to random wandering. Once a "spotter" locates the bird, it is imperative that the bander confirm the location before continuing to Step 2.

(One of the children present found our Kestrel, a female, curiously peering down at us from an I-beam near the front entrance.)

Step 2: Strategic Planning

Depending upon the complexity of the building and its

construction, a planning phase may be required. It is highly desirable that the bander develop several alternative plans (Plan A, Plan B, etc.), since it is highly likely that they will be used. At this point, it can be quite helpful to begin to fantasize about how easy it will be to capture the bird.

(In our case, numerous I-beams, heating and cooling ducts, wiring, lighting fixtures, and a drop-ceiling grid suspended with three feet of support wire occupied the top of the room. To further complicate matters, the store was arranged in a circular fashion, which meant it was likely we would be traveling in circles. We quickly came up with two plans, outlined in Steps 3 and 4.)

Step 3: Bal Chatri Attempt

The obvious, simple solution to this problem is for a very hungry bird to drop onto a baited bal chatri and snare itself. Therefore, bait a bal chatri and place it in such a position as to be in full view of the bird. Move everyone to the opposite side of the store (or perhaps even outside) and give the bird plenty of time to trap itself.

(We observed the familiar "head bobbing" and "tail wagging" common to power line Kestrels, but this one's hunger had not made her bold enough to attempt a swoop in front of fifteen people. "Chainsaw" (the name of our favorite kestreling mouse) gave one of his finest performances, slapping around a cheddar crouton like a one-man hockey exhibition, but to no avail.)

Step 4: Standard Net Attempt

Next, try a standard six meter banding net placed somewhere where the bird might perhaps catch itself as it flies about in the store. This will probably require being creative. The use of an old net is highly recommended. Ladders are a necessity and trash bag twist ties work extremely well in those "hard-to-hang" spots.

(With much reluctance, we positioned two twelve-foot ladders at each end of the cat food aisle, scurried to the top, squeezed our shoulders through the drop ceiling squares, and using the ceiling support cables, proceeded to string a six meter net near the roof. An hour long weaving process gave us three meters of net with two good pockets and another three meters of net hanging limply into space. The Kestrel continued to eye us warily from its lofty I-beam perch.)

Step 5: Lighting Control

Find the lighting control panel for the store and make appropriate lighting changes depending upon the species in question. Some experimentation may be needed at this stage.

(Converse to what we expected, we discovered that Kestrels (or at least this one) tend to stay in the well-lighted areas. It was necessary to illuminate the net to get her to fly near it.)

Step 6: Mopping up

Hold mops or brooms overhead and wave them slowly near the bird. This should have the desired effect of steering the Kestrel towards the net. It is important to use all available personnel during this step, some as "wavers" and some as "spotters, in case the bird temporarily disappears from view in the rafters. Take care to instruct all "wavers" to be careful not to get too close to the bird.

(Our bird spent nearly thirty minutes skillfully moving through the maze near the roof. Finally, in a wide arc behind the main heating duct, she hit the net and softly dropped into the lower pocket. A quick scramble up a ladder, followed by a few minutes of diligent net work, and the bird was free. She turned out to be an AHY-F, plumage normal, cere healthy, and her keel was not at all sharp. She was quickly taken outside, and while an interested group of spectators gathered, she was fitted with band number 1373-69402, photographed, and released. It should be noted that we heard quite a few comments about the size and beauty of the bird, something we as banders understand but often take for granted. During the process of banding this Kestrel, we had a chance to educate 20-30 people to the purposes and virtues of banding. Upon release, the Kestrel flew to a telephone pole 100 yards distant. After a few tail bobs and a few picks at her band, she flew off towards a nearby orchard, presumably in search of prey.)

The Conclusion

A point can be made here. We are quite sure that it is inherently important that banders make discoveries that will advance the science of banding such as the arc-tangent of the angle of the fifth primary x the tarsus cross-sectional area/munsell eye hue > 5.112 equals a hatching year bird. Equally as important, however, is the need to educate the public as to what the banding process is all about. We urge banders confronted with this type of situation to follow through and take the time and effort necessary. It offers a unique opportunity to demonstrate the banding process to people who would otherwise never participate in local nature activities or attend banding demonstrations. It is through this type of education that we impress upon others the lessons that can

be learned from banding and perhaps instill a new appreciation about Kestrels or birds in general.

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Some Ramblings of a Neighborhood Cardinal

On 24 April 1986, I banded an after-hatching-year, male Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) in my yard at Schenectady, New York, with band number 901-57610. It has been my experience that each year a few pairs nest in the neighborhood, and they remain as year-round residents. This bird appeared to be no exception, based on its recaptures on 6 December 1986 and 27 May 1987 in my yard.

In June 1988 I received a call from a local veterinarian that he had a banded Cardinal, brought to him by a person who found it 21 June 1988 lying stunned on the street behind my yard. It was the bird referred to above and presumably had been hit by a vehicle. The point of discovery was less than 200 feet from the trap where originally I had captured it.

The bird recovered at the veterinarian hospital where it was held for part of the day, examined, and released with no apparent serious injury. The hospital release site was 0.95 mile south and 0.05 mile east of where it had been found stunned. In August I received another call concerning this bird. A neighbor, while on a walk, found it along the same roadside on 5 August within 50 feet of where it had been found stunned in June, this time dead, apparently the victim of a vehicular collision.

These encounters suggest that this bird, stunned and transported about a mile, was able to return to its presumed breeding territory. While some highly migratory species are known for their unusual navigational abilities, and while admittedly the distance in this case is not great, it appears to demonstrate a certain sense of navigation in a sedentary species.

*Robert P. Yunick
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