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Trapping and Banding Birds at Iowa City During 1927

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Stoner: Trapping and Banding Birds at Iowa City During 1927

TRAPPING AND BANDING BIRDS AT IOWA CITY
DURING 1927

DAYTON STONER

On March 5, 1927 two Government sparrow traps were placed in the back yard at my home in Iowa City in an effort to secure native birds for banding, an endeavor that I have carried on here since 1920. The traps were left in place without intermission until June 10, 1927 when they were stored not to be operated again until July 28. On September 14 use of the traps was discontinued for the year so that they were in operation but five months, the period covered by this report.

As on previous occasion baits of various kinds were employed in an effort to induce birds to enter the traps.

A total of 79 individuals representing 13 species was taken; of these four individuals representing three species were recovered as returns, and three individuals representing three species were taken as repeats.

The following table will indicate graphically certain details concerning these captures.

NAME OF BIRD	MONTH TAKEN	NUMBER TAKEN	REMARKS
Red-headed Woodpecker	June	1	
Blue Jay	May	4	2 returns and 1 repeat in this lot
	July	1	
	August	3	
	September	2	
Bronzed Grackle	April	2	
	August	5	
	September	1	
House Sparrow	March	1	22 immature birds and 15 adult birds in this lot
	April	2	
	May	18	
	June	11	
	August	5	
Slate-colored Junco	April	2	1 male and 1 female
Cardinal	May	1	Adult female
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	May	1	Adult female
Maryland Yellow-throat	May	1	Adult male
Myrtle Warbler	May	1	Adult female
Brown Thrasher	May	3	1 return and 1 repeat in this lot
	June	1	
	August	4	
	September	2	
Catbird	May	1	
House Wren	May	1	
Robin	April	4	1 return and 1 repeat
	June	1	
12 species		79 Individuals	7 recoveries

The considerable number of species that can be taken under the limited possibilities offered by the surroundings under which this trapping was done is worthy of mention and is suggestive of the fact that more kinds of birds visit our premises, even in the city, than we are often led to believe. In only one other trapping season (1924), when the traps were in place for a considerably greater length of time, has a larger number of species been taken.

As might be expected, the month of May leads with nine *native* species although, curiously enough, the Robin is not listed among them.

On August 31, 1927, three species of native birds, which included three Blue Jays, two Brown Thrashers and two Bronzed Grackles were taken in the two traps. This is the record catch at this station for any one day although a greater catch of House Sparrows has been registered.

During May, also, an influx of House Sparrows was apparent; eighteen of them, mostly young birds well able to fly but quite uninformed as to Government sparrow traps, were taken. On the other hand, the adult birds ran nonchalantly in and out of the traps and were seldom caught although they consumed quantities of bait.

Blue Jays No. 522154 and 522155 were taken in a trap at the same time August 31, 1927. After banding No. 522154 I placed the feet of the bird on the wire clothes line stretched taut near the trap. At once the Jay grasped the wire tightly and I permitted it to rotate slowly until it hung head downward suspended by its feet; it remained "frozen" and swinging gently in this position for about five minutes during which time it was photographed and two small boys walked about under it asking numerous questions in an excited and vociferous manner. Suddenly the bird "came to" and was off with a swish of wings and a loud "Jay." Apparently fright had thoroughly paralyzed the creature.

A few remarks concerning the recovered birds will be of interest. Although the number of recoveries is comparatively small they illustrate something of what may be learned on a larger and more detailed scale from bird banding as our knowledge is augmented by additional captures of tagged birds.

Robin No. 316120, banded as an adult at this station on August 3, 1924 was recovered on April 12, 1927 at the same place. It was, therefore, at least three years old but it had not been taken during the interval.

Blue Jay No. 281554 was banded as an adult by Robert L. Jackson. It was taken in a Government sparrow trap situated in the back yard of his home at Ohio, Illinois at 7:45 A. M., August 8, 1926. Another adult Jay was in the trap with it. No. 281554 was recovered in one of my own traps at Iowa City on May 10, 1927. Ohio, Illinois is about 120 miles southeast of the point of recovery and this return suggests the possibility of an east and west movement of this species.

Blue Jay No. 307079 was taken in one of my own traps on May 25, 1924. Five days less than three years later, May 20, 1927, the bird was recaptured at Iowa City.

Brown Thrasher No. 316178 was banded as an adult at Iowa City on August 2, 1926. On May 31, 1927 it was recovered at the same place.

Concerning the repeats: Robin No. 319120 was banded at 7:00 A. M. on April 22, 1927; at 4:45 P.M. of that day the bird was again in the trap. Evidently the ordeal of banding held no terrors for this individual. Brown Thrasher No. 522158 repeated two days after it was banded on September 1, 1927; and Blue Jay No. 522156 repeated three days after it was banded, also on September 1, 1927:

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