

## Banding Birds.

Very little is known of the travels of birds. The songster that nests in your back yard during the summer time rears a flock of young birds, and the family moves south in winter time. They may spend the winter vacation in the southern states, Mexico, or some go clear on to South America.

Does the same pair of birds return to the apple tree ~~that lived~~ this spring that resided there last spring? Birds of a species all look alike as far as clothes are concerned. There is no permanent way of putting a mark on the plumage of a bird because a bird sheds its feathers as one takes off an old suit of clothes.

The simplest and most permanent mark is a little aluminum leg band or anklet that fits loosely on the leg and bears a special number and record that is kept by the Biological Survey of the Department of Agriculture. This little band is a permanent record, and is in no way bothersome to the bird, and follows it through life.

By this method, some remarkable life histories of birds have been recorded.

*figure prints of name*



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A little vireo that tied her basket nest to the limb of an oak tree ~~axferxfestxfrenxthxground~~ was given an identifying ringlet one summer and the following spring returned and showed every evidence that she was friendly and a member of the family. When the young birds were in the nest, she had learned that human children were not to be feared.

For three different seasons, the kingfishers nested in a hole in the bank above the river. For two years, the same pair returned, but during the winter the male bird perhaps lost his life from an accident or some natural cause and he didn't return. There is a chance that he may have been divorced and elected a new mate. Anyway, the female had a new husband.

The nest was back under ground about three feet. A flock of five children lived in a cave and gradually grew to maturity.

The flickers or woodpeckers that bored a hole in one of the old apple trees were not very stable in their married relations. One of the pairs staid around several years but after the nesting season during the winter, there was a separation and apparently a new marriage was following in the spring.

From appearances, married life may not have been entirely smooth as there was an occasional argument on the top of an old stump. This occurred when the nesting season was half over, and household affairs were weighed down by a large and hungry family.

Early in the spring when the flickers were first married, the lives of no two birds could have been smoother.

A flicker has a bill like a pick-axe to dig into the bark of a tree for insects. Sometimes he digs in the ground for worms or ants.

A flicker's tail feathers are sharp-pointed and act as a prop for his body as he hitches up the side of a tree.



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A flicker's foot is different from that of a robin's. There are two toes in front and two behind, so he can clutch the bark of a tree more easily.

The little blue or California quail came to get grain that was thrown out in the back yard. She was caught one day and a little band put on her leg. Later she had a nest in a nearby field.

When the young were out of the eggs, one turned out to be rather weak and sickly. He was taken to the house and grew up in the study where he showed some literary tendencies.

He forgot all about his wild brothers and sisters, and took entirely to people.

His liking for shoes  
Unafraid of dog  
Taking a dirt bath  
End view, bird on camera



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There are various methods for identification: finger prints for men, brands for livestock, collars for dogs. But for birds, there is a tiny aluminum leg band or anklet that carries a special number and record that is kept by the Biological Survey of the Department of Agriculture.

There is an old saying that "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush," so you have to catch your bird before the little bracelet can encircle his leg.

The simplest method is a little wire trap and food that is attractive to wild birds.

When a bird is trapped, he is naturally scared but if handled in just the right way, he soon forgets being caught and many times birds return to the same trap for food.

Often after receiving a band, a bird will lie in the open hand as if he were totally unafraid.

By banding ducks in various parts of the country, these are often killed by hunters during the shooting season, and very valuable data has been secured on the migrations or travels of water fowls. Formerly it was thought that the ducks moved south to spend the winter and returned north to breed. Banding records show that many birds travel east or west as well as to the north and south



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