

is to a greater extent than normally exposed to the attacks of its enemies. From the experiences of the past year or more, I am satisfied that this injury to the wing, whatever may be its explanation, can be wholly avoided by holding the wings close to the body in their normal position during the entire time in which the bird remains in the bander's hand.—WILLIAM P. WHARTON.

Repeating White-throats.—Although I have become an active bird-bander, I hardly feel as though I knew much about it. In banding over 925 birds of 27 species during the past year, and being on the constant lookout for birds showing marked individuality, none aroused more interest than an adult female White-throated Sparrow that came to one of three rather closely situated traps over a period of ten days with a persistency that is difficult to explain. Perhaps the over-development of the trap habit in a bird may be termed a "trap complex." The banding date of this White-throat (No. B109968), captured in a Government sparrow-trap, was October 5th. It was not present on the 6th. On the 7th it was recaptured twice, on the 8th six times, on the 9th four times, on the 10th five times, twice on the 11th, twice on the 12th, five times on the 13th, five times on the 14th, and finally, three times on the 15th. I have never before experienced this, although to-day another White-throat that made its initial appearance, an immature female, repeated *eight* times!—MAURICE BROWN, Lenox, Massachusetts.

Variations in Towhee Irises and Rectrices.—During the winters of 1929 and 1930 in Summerville, South Carolina, further record was kept of both of the Towhees with reference to the following characters: (1) color of the iris, and (2) number of tail-feathers on each side tipped with white.

In the case of those identified as Towhees (*Pipilo e. erythrophthalmus*), 99 of which were banded, 44 had irises described as blood red, 38 irises described as reddish brown, 8 irises as brown, and 4 as light reddish. The tail-feathers were noted in the cases of 92 of these birds, 67 of which had 3 white-tipped feathers on each side, 22 had 4 feathers, 2 had 5, and one bird was recorded as having only 2 feathers thus tipped. The bird last mentioned had the rather unusual combination of a dark-brown iris and only 2 white-tipped tail-feathers, which made its classification somewhat difficult. Probably the depth of brown of the iris, possibly combined with a greater amount of white in the plumage other than the tail, decided the classification made. The combination of brown iris and 4 white-tipped tail-feathers, while less noteworthy, was seen in only two instances.

In the case of those identified as White-eyed Towhees (*Pipilo e. alleni*), 38 of which were banded, 3 had pure white irises, 17 had light yellow ones, 7 straw-colored, 1 orange, and 10 light brown. In the matter of tail-feathers 12 had 2 on each side white-tipped, 24 had 3, and one had 4. This last bird had a straw-colored iris, making a combination as unusual as that of the dark-brown iris and 2 tipped feathers mentioned above in the case of the presumed Towhee. One bird with a light-brown iris and 3 tail-feathers with very slight white tips, was called a White-eyed Towhee because of the lightness of the brown iris.

The foregoing record, while it proves nothing, serves to indicate the wide variations within the species and the sub-species of the characters mentioned. Despite efforts to interest permanent residents of Summerville in close observation of the birds found there during the summer, with a view to ascertaining if any with red, reddish, or very dark brown eyes remain there, thus far as least I have been unable to get any information

on this important point, which more than anything else would throw light on the question of whether any birds of the northern form interbreed with those which are permanent residents.—W. M. P. WHARTON.

What was wrong with this House Wren?—On June 24, 1928, while a brood of nestling House Wrens (*Troglodytes aëdon aëdon*) were being banded, one of the parent birds, banded 22 days previously, appeared near the nest acting in a seemingly strange manner. Fluttering as though crippled, it fell to the ground at a distance of fifteen feet from the writer. Supposing the bird to be severely injured or dead, I walked forward and picked up the prostrate form. The bird was retained until apparently recovered (about ten minutes) and then released, to enact the same performance. It was again retrieved and, after being held five minutes, released, when it flew with agility. This bird was taken as a repeat forty-four days later in a near-by nest-box, with a new mate, rearing a second brood. Hence, it is certain that complete recovery was won.

Whether this action can be classified as a reaction to molestation of the nest might be questionable. Since it occurred coincident with the disturbance of the nest, this would appear to be a tenable diagnosis. Certainly, in any event this bird was not feigning crippledness.—PAUL A. STEWART, Leetonia, Ohio.

Plumage Pattern of the Screech Owl.—A Screech Owl (*Otus asio asio*) gray phase, was banded at Lakewood, Ohio, October 20, 1930, No. 309305.



No trace of brown or rufous appeared, the feathers being mostly light gray, barred with darker gray and black. The breast and throat showed a symmetrical area almost white bordered with black. Excepting for the iris, which was yellow, the photograph shows the owl in its true colors, the only colors present being shades of gray, black and white.

Examination of the photograph, shown here, in a dim light or at a distance of several feet shows a change to a grotesque plumage pattern. Perhaps the photograph when viewed close up represents the bird as his friends see him, the other aspect being reserved as a warning pattern for his enemies or as a terrifying pattern for prospective prey.—E. C. HOFFMAN, Forest Cliff Drive, Lakewood, Ohio.