

BLACKBIRD BANDING RESULTS

by J. A. SLIMMON*

In 1963, under the direction of Dr. B. Gollop, Canadian Wildlife Service, I began banding Red-winged Blackbirds and Yellow-headed Blackbirds on marshes near Saskatoon. Only nestlings and local young which had just recently left the nest were banded with emphasis placed on finding Red-winged nestlings rather than Yellow-headed nestlings. In spite of this approach however, in two of the subsequent 11 years, more Yellow-headed nestlings were banded than Red-winged.

Table 1 shows the number banded in each of the 11 years since 1963, the number of birds subsequently recovered, and the year of each recovery. All recoveries are of Red-winged Blackbirds.

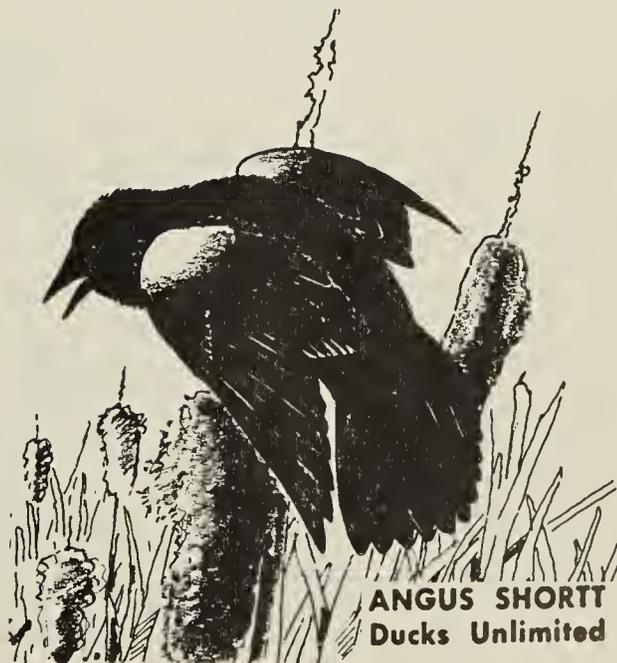
Table 2 provides the detail of each recovery. The exact recovery date of bird #5 is uncertain. The only date available to the Patuxent Wildlife Center was the postmark on the letter in which the band was returned.

A review of these recoveries show that three are within year recoveries. Recovery numbers 4 and 6 were found dead at the same slough on which they were banded, while number 3 was recaptured at a banding slough.

Recovery pattern of numbers 1, 2 and 5 is interesting. The first two (number 1 and 2) suggest that Red-winged Blackbirds banded in the Saskatoon area return to the same

'general' area. If this is correct, number 1 and 5 returned four times while number 2 returned three times. Recovery number 5 indicates that some Saskatoon Red-winged Blackbirds migrate as far south as Mexico. The general recovery area of number 5 was near Carranza some 1,180 miles southeast of the California-Mexico border and 560 miles southwest of the Texas-Mexico border.

A conclusion which could be reached from Table 1 is that in a period of 12 years (in ten of which birds were banded) of the 1,467 nestling Red-winged and Yellow-headed Blackbirds banded only a 0.20% of the birds banded were recovered. This suggests that, if one were to hope for one recovery per year, an average of 500 nestling Blackbirds would have to be banded each year.



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Table 1.
Banding and Recoveries of Blackbirds

<i>Year</i>	<i>Yellow-headed</i>	<i>Red-winged</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Recoveries</i>	<i>Year of recovery</i>
1963	123	—	123	1	1967
1964	16	24	40	—	—
1965	62	145	207	1	1968
1966	52	42	94	—	—
1967	106	26	132	—	—
1968	—	—	—	—	—
1969	93	32	125	1	1974
1970	71	—	71	—	—
1971	—	—	—	—	—
1972	157	92	249	—	—
1973	134	116	250	2	1973
1074	101	75	176	1	1974
TOTAL	915	552	1,467	6	

Table 2.
Details on recoveries of banded Blackbirds from Saskatoon

<i>Re-covery No.</i>	<i>Date banded</i>	<i>Location of banding</i>	<i>Date recovered</i>	<i>Location of recovery</i>	<i>Recovered by</i>	<i>Age at recovery</i>	<i>State at recovery</i>
1	22/6/63	Hudson Bay Marsh	8/9/67	4 mi. N. of Leroy, Sask.	Cal Torwalt, Leroy, Sask.	4 yrs., 2-1/2 mos.	shot
2	21/6/65	Hudson Bay Marsh	19/5/68	2 mi. E. of Warman, Sask.	Rick Moore, Saskatoon, Sask.	2 yrs., 11 mos.	shot
3	19/6/73	Gevelot Slough	7/7/73	Same location	Stuart Rosmussen, Saskatoon, Sask.	18 days+	caught and released
4	2/7/73	Clarence Avenue, South	31/7/73	Same location.	Vernon Linn, Saskatoon, Sask.	29 days+	found dead
5	30/6/69	North Airport Slough	?/4/74	Carranza, Mexico.	Ramiro Rodriguez, Mexico.	4 yrs., 9 mos.	shot
6	23/6/74	Hudson Bay Marsh	27/6/74	Same location.	Dean Bisset, Saskatoon, Sask.	4 days+	found dead