

SASKATCHEWAN BIRD BANDERS: FRED BRADSHAW AND PROTEGES*

C. STUART HOUSTON, (Banding permit 00460), 863 University Drive, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. S7N 0J8

In the bird banding files at Patuxent Refuge, Laurel, Maryland, Fred Bradshaw is listed as the holder of Banding Permit Number 002. In truth, Bradshaw acted more as a facilitator who encouraged and "farmed out" bands to others in the early days. Under his "umbrella" were A.F. Wolther of Morse, James Silver of Unity (who obtained permit 008 in his own right), Fred G. Bard with permit 151 and A.E. Etter, who obtained permit 181.

Fred Bradshaw, after having served as the Chief Game Commissioner for Saskatchewan, became the first Director of the Provincial Museum, Regina, in 1928.⁵

A.F. Wolther

Band 100553, "issued by the Saskatchewan Game Department" and applied by A.F. Wolther, resulted in 1921 in the earliest recovery from a Saskatchewan-banded bird, using official Biological Survey bands.

Bradshaw's annual report is worth quoting: "Another item of interest is that of a young pelican that was captured by Mr. A.F. Wolther of Morse. This bird appeared to be in good health but apparently very tired, and settled down on the dam near to the Canadian Pacific Railway at that point. Mr. Wolther coaxed the bird to get out of his hand and it allowed him to take it home. He fed it fish and raw meat and evidently it fared quite well on these rations. A tag furnished by the department was attached to the leg of the pelican and Mr. Wolther gave the bird its freedom, but was reluctant to leave, and would mere-

ly fly over to the dam and return to his barn every night. However, on October 22nd he notified the department that the bird had at last made up its mind to go south, and on November 9th, he advised us that the pelican had been recaptured by Mr. F.L. Norman, of Lindsay, South Dakota, who again released it after attaching an additional band bearing the address of the second captor."¹

This record for 100553 was quoted by Frederick C. Lincoln in 1939, as one of the three most interesting pelican recoveries in the banding files. He stated that it had been banded on 22 October 1921 and was "shot" 5 days later, on 27 October 1921, at Lindsay, South Dakota.⁴ A third version of the story gives the date of departure as 30 October and the date of arrival at "Cheyenne River, South Dakota" as 1 November.² Perhaps because of this confusion, or because it was such an early record, this recovery is not on the computer printout of recoveries from Saskatchewan banding.

On the other hand, there is a Double-crested Cormorant recovery on the computer printout: 100573. Banded at Last Mountain Lake on an unknown date and year, but possibly 1922. It was shot on 27 April 1930 in Minnesota, 44° 10' North and 93° 20' West, near Faribault, Minnesota. When I enquired years ago as to the identity of bander 002, I was told it was "A.F. Wolther for Fred Bradshaw," but it is more probable that Wolther was involved in banding the White Pelican only.

number 16 in a series of biographies of Saskatchewan bird banders

James Silver, Unity, permit 008

James Silver, believed to have been a farmer near Unity, banded a few ducks in 1922, under permit 008, though there is a notation "under the direction of Fred Bradshaw, Regina." He may have been a relative of either Fred Sterling Silver or Oliver James Silver, both of whom homesteaded near Unity, Saskatchewan. (It is virtually certain that he was NOT the James Silver in the extant bird banding files, the James C. Silver who worked for the Biological Survey in Washington, D.C., and banded Common Terns on Cobb's Island, Virginia, in 1936).

Silver caught and banded three flightless young Gadwalls, one pintail, one Blue-winged Teal and one Canvasback near Unity on 15 August 1922.

The pintail was shot at Killsquaw Lake, 3 miles east of where it was banded, on 23 September. All three Gadwall were shot that year: one on 23 September at Killsquaw Lake; one on 16 November in Pabo Duro Canyon, Randall County, Texas; and one on 27 November in Crittenden County, Arkansas.

Banding at Old Wives Lake in 1928

A letter of 17 January 1929 from J.B. Harkin, Commissioner, Canadian National Parks, to Paul Redington, the new Chief, Bureau of Biological Survey, Washington, has the following postscript: "Mr. Bradshaw reports that he also banded a few Cormorants, Great Blue Herons & Pelicans at Lake Johnston, but regrets that he has misplaced his records for these birds."

Bradshaw thereby committed the ultimate sin that a bander may perpetrate, and any recoveries from these birds could be entered, but would sit in a "limbo" file forever.

Lucky Lake botulism outbreak

There was an outbreak of botulism at Luck Lake in late July 1928. An incredibly

high proportion, three of the four treated pintails, banded under Bradshaw's permit on 28 July, were shot by hunters as follows:

208412, on 1 November 1928, northwest of Dodge City, Kansas

208413, on 14 January 1929, at Los Banos, California

208417, on 6 November 1928, at Midlothian, Texas.

A Mallard, similarly treated on the same day, was shot on 17 October 1928, 4 miles south of Regina, Saskatchewan.

A.E. Etter, permit 181

A.E. Etter was Saskatchewan's Game Commissioner for several years in the 1930s.

In 1932, he banded two Mallards at Craven and J.A. Innes (or J.A. Simes?) banded 12 Mallards and 4 Canvasbacks on 27 August at Senlac, Saskatchewan.

Gilbert Stratton, Box 988, Weyburn, Saskatchewan, sent the following report direct to the Biological Survey in Washington:

"Last winter I caught a wild duck and kept it through the winter. Mr. Armit, a local business man, got a bird band for me from Mr. A.E. Etter, with instructions to notify you when the bird was freed.

Band number: illegible

Sex: Male

Species: Mallard

Banded at: Weyburn

Liberated: May 24th, 1932 near the Souris River."

There is a notation at the bottom of this letter that the band had been issued to Fred Bradshaw. Computer entries show this to be the only duck banded under permit 002 in 1932.

Nicholas Albulet, permit 5537

Nick Albulet was in the employ of the Saskatchewan Museum of Natural His-

tory for several years in the 1930s. He had a permit of his own from 1934 through 1936. Of 27 birds banded at Regina, 26 were Western Meadowlarks, 13 each in 1934 and 1936. He also banded one Sora on 23 May 1934. No recoveries resulted from his banding.

Fred G. Bard, permit 151 [also 3982 and 4345]

Under Bradshaw's permit, one shoveler was banded in Regina in July 1928 and two Mallards were banded at the Quill Lakes in July 1928.

Extant banding schedules at Patuxent from Bradshaw himself involve only 26 non-game birds, all from 1929, and these appear to be in the handwriting of Fred Bard, Bradshaw's young assistant. Four were Slate-colored Juncos banded at Dafoe, Saskatchewan, in late April, by Bard, using bands issued to Bradshaw. At the Quill Lakes he banded 13 White Pelicans on 15 June and 17 Ring-billed Gulls and 5 Common Terns on 11 July. Seven immature Mallards were banded at the Quill Lakes; one of these, banded on 10 June 1929, was shot on 1 October 1929 at Guernsey, Saskatchewan. There

were also four Willets banded at Last Mountain Lake, one on 30 June and 3 on 11 July.

Fred G. Bard also had banded six birds in 1928 and four in 1929 under his own permit 151; this was the forerunner of a large-scale project that involved banding 13,363 individual birds.¹

¹ BRADSHAW, F. 1922. Report of the Chief Game Guardian. Regina: 17th Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture, pp. 329-382.

² CANADIAN NATIONAL PARKS BRANCH. 1924. Official Canadian record of bird-banding returns. *Can. Field-Nat.* 28:91-93.

³ HOUSTON, C.S. 1970. Saskatchewan bird banders: Fred G. Bard. *Blue Jay* 28:150-156.

⁴ LINCOLN, F.C. 1939. The Migration of American Birds. New York: Doubleday, Doran, p. 113.

⁵ SYMONS, R.D. 1966. Personal recollections of some early Saskatchewan naturalists. *Blue Jay* 24:2-6.



Lightless young are often banded; young Double-crested Cormorants at Perry's Point colony, Last Mountain Lake, 1969
Gary Anweiler