

MORE ON COMMUNICATION

In the editorial the problems of communication between amateur and professional ringers were aired. However, ringing should not be considered in isolation: we all rely on the co-operation and interest of the general public for the bulk of the recoveries. Where possible attempts should be made to have interesting recoveries and aspects of ringing published in our local press. Such news items will help to increase the general public's awareness not only of ringing activities but also of the broader necessity to conserve our natural heritage.

Hopefully, one day, public interest will become so great that our newspaper editors will think it worthwhile to follow the example of the London "Sunday Telegraph" of January 9 1977 which published the following article on the front page:

GOOSE'S ATLANTIC RECORD

by George Furnows
in Dublin

A Brent goose with the identification mark D62 in four consecutive years has flown the Atlantic between Arctic Canada and Ireland seven times.

This record may have been equalled by other geese ringed in Bathurst and Melville islands, Canada, and checked in Ireland but D62's remarkable flights are verifiable from secret markings.

It has long been assumed that the pale-breasted Brent geese, which winter mainly on the east coast of Ireland, came from northern Greenland, not Canada. The dark-bellied species mostly seen in Britain and rarely in Ireland breed in Siberia.

Yellow Collars

Canadian wild life workers placed lightweight collars on the necks of geese hatched in the Queen Elizabeth islands in Arctic Canada in the summer of 1971. Some were found that winter at Strangford Lough, Co. Down, Lough Neagh, Co. Antrim and Bailina, Co. Mayo.

The collars are about 2 inches deep and are bright yellow. Each carries a number and letter that can be read through binoculars or a telescope.

In 1975 the codes on 25 collars were clearly read in Ireland. The markings done in 1976 are now showing up on geese that have arrived this winter.

Computer Used

Irish observers transmit the information to Canada where, within minutes, a computer gives the date of marking of individual birds.

Thus it is known that D62 was hatched in 1973, had been to Ireland and back twice, being collarmarked in Canada in the summer of 1975. It was next seen in the North Bull sanctuary in Co. Dublin, on January 11 1976.

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THE LIGHTER SIDE OF SAFRING

In January this year Mr Zablon Godia of the Kenya Police, Eldoret reported the recovery of a South African ringed European Swallow. His letter began:-

Dear Sirs

I have the pleasure to inform the Government of South Africa (Pretoria Zoo)". We always did wonder!

The ringing/recovery details of the European Swallow are:

R. 493 European Swallow Hirundo rustica AA 29105 (A. Hewitt)
22.12.74 Melrose Dam, Johannesburg 26 08S, 28 04E
05.11.76 Sidini Market, Kenya 00 09N, 34 23E
Bird caught - subsequent fate unknown