

it cannot be swallowed because the gills get caught against the sides of the mouth, and it has to be regurgitated. A dropped fish will not be picked up again. The bird does not drink and so the fish are kept in ice cold water. If the smelts are very large, one about every two hours seems to suffice, but if small, two and sometimes even three will disappear. On an average the Murre consumes about a pound of fish each day. When he has had sufficient he emits a strange hooting "aahh" several times. It could be "thank you" or "that's enough" or just plain indigestion, but it sounds most like an "aahh" of satisfaction. Otherwise the bird makes few sounds except to yell if he has to be caught. He still takes exception to being handled, and lets it be known vocally, and with some pretty accurate beak attacks.

The Murre now spends the warmest part of milder days outside in a large cage banked with snow for protection from cold winds. Once outside he does a good deal of wing flapping, waddles around occasionally, and takes the odd short flight around the cage, by launching himself from atop a rock. Other than this he is not too active and spends most of the time resting. He does more preening when outside, and seems to be getting some natural oil in his feathers, but he cannot withstand lower temperatures yet. Temperature changes from the house to outdoors do not seem to bother him if the day is reasonably pleasant. He seems to have adapted to his new life style with little fuss. He will walk into his indoor cage himself, and settle comfortably. He is not at all perturbed by dogs or cats or a noisy parrot, and he knows the fish container! He is mostly very docile and makes no attempt to fight being in a cage. Occasionally he escapes outside and goes flapping over the fields but is unable to lift off the ground. He obviously requires a high place or water for take off.

The remaining problem is whether or not the bird can stay afloat in water for a long period. The Fish and Wildlife Division has had previous experience with a number of birds found coated with oil, and despite cleaning and care, when they were finally returned to the sea, all sank in the water. It has been decided to keep the bird till spring, thus deferring the problem. Perhaps if the bird moults, new feathers and a new distribution of natural oils will resolve the problem. In the meantime keeping a Common Murre is proving a fascinating experience.

Mrs. Joan Taylor, Vernon River

GADWALLS SEEN AT WINTER BANDING STATION

The Fish and Wildlife Division is conducting its annual winter duck banding program again this year to obtain information on the wintering population of black ducks. Ducks are fed corn on the ice for several days until finally they are enticed into a trap baited with corn.

Conservation Officer Gerard MacIntyre has a banding station set up at St. Andrew's, east of Mt. Stewart. On January 22 he saw two gadwalls in the vicinity of the station and true to their reputation they appeared to be robbing food from black ducks.

The gadwall is a native of Western Canada and has only recently extended its range to P.E.I. Since 1972 gadwalls have reared broods at Indian River Wildlife Management Area, but to my knowledge this is the first record of wintering birds. The gadwall is easily recognized by the large white patch on the speculum of the wing.

- Rosemary Curley
Fish & Wildlife Division