one foot, only using the other to keep its balance when alighting. At other times the crippled foot was held straight out and usually pointing backward, although sometimes forward.

Unfortunately our supply of the small size bands became exhausted so that a number of Juncos had to be released unbanded. During the migration of the past season, ninety-one individuals of this species have been banded.

On April 14, 1929, we recovered Song Sparrow No. 63591 banded in June, 1923, at Marshfield, Mass., by Joseph A. Hagar.—WENDELL P. SMITH, Wells River, Vt., June 4, 1929.

An Early Record for the Scarlet Tanager.—On April 20, 1929, the Biological Survey received from George D. Eustis, of Vineyard Haven, Massachusetts, a specimen of the Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga erythromelas*) that had been found dead by his gardener on the morning of April 18th. The specimen, which was a female, had evidently been dead for several days, as it was so badly decomposed that it could not be preserved.

In "Items of Interest," No. 96, issued by the Division of Ornithology of the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture, on May 6, 1929, Dr. John B. May refers to the severe storm that occurred on the northern Atlantic coast at that time. It seems probable that this storm was responsible for this and other unusual occurrences this season on the Massachusetts coast. In the Washington, D. C., region, Scarlet Tanagers arrived about on time, the first seen being on April 27th. The earliest record for this area is April 17, 1896.—FREDERICK C. LINCOLN, *Biological Survey*, Washington, D. C.

Cowbirds—Decoys—Incubation Period.—The antagonism of our native birds to the Cowbird (*Molothrus ater ater*) may be utilized if the bander happens to capture one of this species, preferably the female bird. A female Cowbird placed in a sparrow-type trap resulted in the immediate capture of a male Cowbird and subsequently of a pair of Robins who were nesting nearby. The Biological Survey mentions that banded birds should be released immediately after banding. The case of the Cowbird, however, if banded, would seem to be a special one, as the nestlings of this species require no care from their own kind. In fact, if the female Cowbird is prevented from accomplishing her usual practice of laying her eggs in the nests of other birds, the result is that more of the other nestlings survive.

Many observers have reported that Cowbird eggs usually hatch before those of the parasitized species. A Cowbird captured by me for banding was found apparently to be eggbound, having an abnormally enlarged abdomen. To determine the true cause of this, the bird was placed under observation in a cage. The next morning two eggs were found. This occurrence suggests that, due to the power of retaining their eggs which the Cowbirds seem to have, part of the incubation period may be represented by the period of retention. The result would be as observed, a shorter incubation period for the Cowbird as compared with the birds it selects for raising its young.

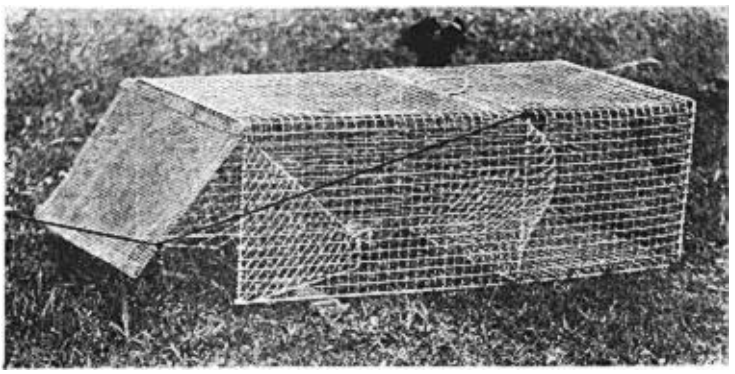
From a study of the nesting of the Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia melodia*), which included one egg of the Cowbird, in May and June, 1928, the incubation period of the Cowbird appeared to be twelve days, while that of the Song Sparrow averaged thirteen days, two eggs remaining unhatched. The faster growth of the Cowbird nestling eventually made its weight five times that of the smallest Song Sparrow, and the nest space

began to be too small to contain all four nestlings. The young Cowbird, on account of its greater weight, occupied the lower position in the nest. When the adults arrived with food, all four nestlings raised themselves as high as possible to receive it. The smallest Song Sparrow, being above its Cowbird nestmate, for several days experienced great difficulty in maintaining its place, and finally was forced over the edge by the rising up of the young Cowbird. Though replaced in the nest, it was missing the following day. The nest space remaining then proved sufficient for the rearing of the two Song Sparrow nestlings and the Cowbird nestling. There seemed to be no movements of the Cowbird nestling intended to eject the Song Sparrow nestlings. The movements of the Cowbird resulting in the ejection of its nestmate apparently were incidental to the act of feeding.

The cover picture is of a very young Cowbird recently out of the nest.—E. C. HOFFMAN, Lakewood, Ohio.

Experimental Sparrow-Type Trap with Door Attachment.—Every bird-bander occasionally feels that an opportunity for securing valuable returns of banded birds is lost when certain of these become accustomed to passing in and out of the common type of sparrow trap.

For the purpose of capturing trap-wise birds, the attachment shown below has been devised. It has been in use several months and has been the means of providing records of individual birds which could not otherwise have been obtained. The auxiliary door, made of quarter-inch mesh hardware cloth (the trap itself is better made of the same mesh), is fastened to the top of the trap by four rings, to allow free movement. The material for the door is folded over an inch on all sides to avoid sharp edges, and is used wide enough to extend half an inch from each side of the trap. Closing of the door when tension on the pull-string or wire is released, is made certain by an elastic cord attached to the door and to the middle of the trap. The tension on this cord is just sufficient to close the door. No trip stick is required. When a trap-wise bird enters, the operator, who preferably is stationed out of the bird's vision, releases the tension



PULL-STRING SPARROW TRAP