

## SHRIKES ARE EASY TO TRAP

by Albert E. Conway

Elsewhere in this issue, Arthur L. Stone, Jr., remarks upon his failure in attempting to trap shrikes in Florida this winter. In the two cases in which Loggerhead Shrikes have visited our station, it was a very simple matter to capture them for banding.

In both cases, they occurred when the ground was snow-covered and a simple four by three foot drop trap was being hand-operated. In each case, the shrike was first seen jumping around the top of the trap attempting to get at the bird inside, in one case a Tree Sparrow, in the other a Song Sparrow. Both times, I went to the trap and drove the sparrow into a gathering cage, during which operation the shrike concerned sat in a pear tree within a few feet of me, eyeing the operation. The gathering cage was then placed under the drop trap, and it was but a few moments until the shrike resumed its efforts to get at the intended victim. So readily did the shrikes go under the drop trap that I scarcely was able to get to the pull-string before I had to return to the trap to remove the culprit.

While on the subject of shrikes, I would like to make a request for information on measurements and other characters of shrikes captured by members. In many standard books on identification, the color of the basal portion of the lower mandible is given as a point of differentiation between the Northern and Loggerhead Shrikes; similarly, whether or not the black mask meets above the base of the upper mandible is considered diagnostic. However, from examination of several live birds, from study of many museum skins, and from conversations with competent field students, I have come to the conclusion that these characters may not be as reliable for differentiation as has been thought.

It would be appreciated if members would supply the following data on shrikes which they catch: length of tail, length of folded wing, distance from nostril to tip of upper mandible (straight line distance); distance from base to tip of upper mandible (straight line distance); whether or not black of mask meets above base of upper mandible; amount and intensity of barring on breast; general color of the back; color of the basal portion of the lower mandible (flesh or horn colored or black). Total length of bird would be helpful, but just try to determine this from a live shrike! --Route 4, Easton, Pennsylvania

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