vania, but she will be unable to attend the Annual Meeting at Washington Crossing because, at that time, she will be visiting her daughter and family in California.

A few days before his death, Mr. Gillespie sent your Editor what is probably his last bird note, an account of the House Finch which appears elsewhere in this issue. --A.E.C.

* * *

## HOW DOES ONE TRAP ENGLISH SPARROWS IN LARGE NUMBERS

by Mary A. Heimerdinger

(Note: The following communication comes as a surprise to the Editor whose chief problem concerning this species is how not to trap it. Although comments from other banders will be welcomed, it would appear to the Editor that the size of the traps used was the chief difficulty. It has been his experience that such small, one-celled traps take English Sparrows only sparingly. On the other hand, larger traps such as the Modesto trap, Middleton thrush trap, and F. & W. Service dove trap take these birds in large numbers. So far as the box trap is concerned, it is effective if one does not take into account the time required to watch it constantly.--Editor)

I started on a research project involving the navigation of non-migrant species. In the little banding that I had done up to that time, I had trapped several English Sparrows and did not think it would be too difficult to trap a large number for the experiment. I intended to band them with colored bands to be able to distinguish each individual bird when it returned to the colony.

For two weeks, I pre-baited several areas I had noticed the birds feeding in. Then I set out three traps, one top-opening, one front-opening, and one two-celled Potter trap, the first two being Gill-made. These traps were baited and left open for another two weeks. Then I set them and awaited results. I caught numbers of Juncos, Chickadees, and, as the Spring wore on, many migrant species. But not once did a sparrow enter the traps. I finally was reduced to using a large box trap, hiding inside a building, string in hand. After three months of this, I caught the grand total of eleven English Sparrows, six squirrels, two cats, and a collie. I dropped the trap on the mammals in an effort to scare them away from the area. My results, due to the small numbers



of birds, were not valid but led me to want to repeat the experiment in the future if I can discover an efficient way of trapping English Sparrows.

My trouble was not due to a small population in the area, as there were several flocks of at least 300 individuals living in the ivy of the sides of buildings. I considered a water trap ineffective as there was a large pond nearby. I used every kind of bait I could think of: standard wild bird seed (from the Audubon Society), sunflower seed, suet, bread, rolls, muffins, and even doughnuts. Nothing would attract them. The traps were kept baited day and night with the various types of food, but even when no people were near, the birds would not feed in the traps.

The only conclusion I could reach was that the sparrows were extraordinarily trap-shy, which seems rather unusual for the species. If the birds had another easy food supply nearby, I could not find it. I would be very grateful if some of the other members could help me out by suggesting baits or types of traps they have found particularly attractive to English Sparrows. --28 Bayview Terrace, Manhasset, N.Y.

* * *

## CONCERNING BIRDS OF PREY

by Benjamin P. Burtt, Ph.D.,
Associate Professor of Chemistry, Syracuse University

For three seasons, I have been engaged in banding birds of prey in the nest, and it has been most exciting and will eventually tell us something of their movements. The Red-tail is of particular interest to me, not only because of its great abundance in central New York, but because we do not know too much concerning its seasonal movements. We see them here in the breeding season, we see them about the same areas in Winter, and we see them in migration. Now which birds are which?

The techniques which I use were adapted from those of Broley, and it was after I read his book that I thought about banding nestling birds of prey. I shoot a two-ounce lead weight over a limb with a large home-made slingshot. This pulls up a 25-pound nylon test line from a spinning reel. A clothes line is pulled up with the fishline and next a half-inch manila rope. With a sturdy friend on the other end of the rope and with one end tied to a safety belt I climb up using irons.