

RE: MIST NETTING  
Mrs. Gustave A. Dumont, Sr.

Having read with care Mr. Bergstrom's article on advantages of taking birds in nets in the recent issue of EBBA NEWS (Bergstrom, "The Safety of Birds in Nets", 19:75-80) I feel that I must defend the taking of birds in traps.

I own and have operated a net occasionally at my Station; also assisted with the net-banding Operation at Island Beach this year. In my opinion the nets are much more dangerous to birds than traps - provided, of course, that the traps are in good condition and are tended as they should be. Traps at my station include house, government sparrow, potter, Brenckle type, drop and false-bottom, also the all-purpose trap and basket trap for woodpeckers. In 24 years of banding we have never had a broken leg; practically no loss of feathers, or for that matter any serious injury to amount to anything. We did have two casualties however, one where the bird tried to escape as the door of the Potter trap was closing and was caught by the neck; the other caused by the operator not making sure the bird was well inside a drop trap. This danger however has been completely eliminated as to overcome this type of injury we have put  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " legs at both corners at the front of the drop trap and tacked a piece of old carpeting 2" wide onto the three sides of the drop trap, thus making it perfectly safe. I might also state that we have banded over 18,000 birds, so you see how slight the percentage of injury is with traps. I have only taken 7 birds in my net.

Now, my sole objection to the netting is because of shock to the birds, which in many instances hinders their flight. Whether this is of lasting effect I, of course, cannot tell, not having had enough experience with netting. I do know though that birds at Island Beach in some instances lost their lives, and this is not meant as a criticism of the operators of the nets, for when a large flock of birds enter the nets at one time, from experience I know they cannot be extricated fast enough. I personally have had no net casualties, but I practically stay put within eyesight of the net when in use. I also know that other banders have reported more injuries and casualties from trapping, but I believe they may be due to not being able to tend the traps often enough, or perhaps when trapping is extremely heavy. I personally never leave my traps without attention for more than an hour any time. I realize everybody hasn't the time to give to their traps perhaps that I have but I happen to be a busy person myself and often do not operate the traps when I know I cannot give them the proper attention.

As for not allowing people to see nets in use, I don't, but never-

theless, in the work I do around this area, I must be able to let people into my trapping area. You see I do considerable work with school children, scout and brownie groups; also some garden clubs, along conservation lines, and since they come to my home for study purposes, it's only natural that I allow them the use of my backyard. Also individuals stop in any time, to say nothing of children, for some kind of information or other, so one can readily see why netting with me on any large scale or even with my one net, would give a bad impression to the public.

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# NEWS

IN

BRIEF

Quips Merrill Wood when asked for a photo of him and his family looking at birds in Mexico, "My children never look at birds unless it is fried chicken" \*\*\* Elinor McEntee, Ridgewood, N.J., banded a Dickcissel Nov 30th and has a Mockingbird around she hasn't yet been able to trap \*\*\* James Baird, guiding genius of Operation Recovery, has a book out "The Ecology of the Watchung Reservation, Union County, N.J." Copies at \$1.50 may be obtained from Dr. M.F. Buell, Dept. of Botany, Rutgers Univ., New Brunswick, N.J. \*\*\* Welded wire mesh can now be purchased from Montgomery Ward in the  $\frac{1}{2}$  x 1 inch size at about 13¢ per foot, writes Stephen W. Simon, Monkton, Md. \*\*\* G. Hapgood Parks, Hartford, Conn. writes that he has a White-throated Sparrow wintering with him for the second consecutive season. Unusual for his locality \*\*\* "Fragmentary Net Results of Bird Banding" quips Beecher S. Bowditch of Demarest, N.J. on viewing FPFJr's sketches on the front cover of the previous issue. "Anyhow they're darned good," he continues, "nothing that the artist should object to having an admiring public get a squint at. I'd greatly have liked to possess the ability to turn out such sketches back in the long ago." Others also wrote approving comments \*\*\* Donald H. Warren, Amityville, N.Y. reports a female cowbird banded in January 1956 trapped and released at Skowhegan, Maine in September - a male Red-winged Blackbird banded in April, 1956 trapped and released in October at Bombay Hook, Delaware \*\*\* Eleanor Dater, 159 Grove St., Ramsey, N.J. has found a source for good mist nets in Japan and is willing to sell a few at cost (about \$1.50) to qualified banders \*\*\* As we go to press, news of astounding number of birds being banded by three South Jersey banders reaches us: Elise Dickerson of Spotswood banded 932 cowbirds in four days and 1590 of 16 species in the first two-thirds of January; Bennett Matlack of Bridgeton banded more than 400 in one day and is over 1600 for the same period; the Rev. Garrett Detwiler banded over 2300 by January 21st. Your Editor thought he did marvelously well banding an even 2000 in all of 1956! \*\*\*